

new worlds

Speculative Fiction

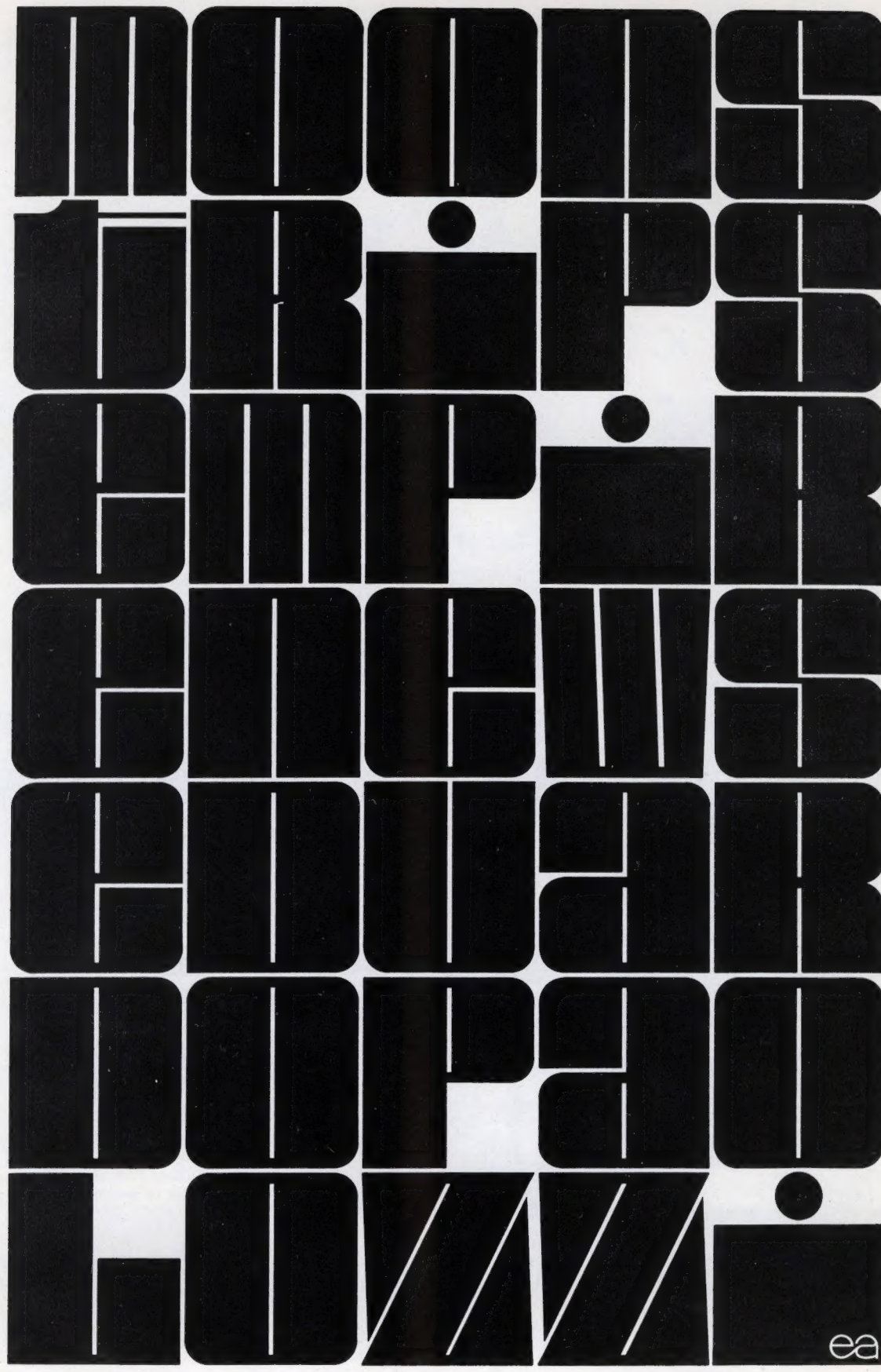
August · 3s. 6d.

W/ Bookback
3 Arkwright



But the advance of the human intellect has not lain solely in the realm of natural science and what things I have seen there, excuse me, not many can do because of their bulk and because of their lack of retention of breath

Paolozzi:
Language Mechanisms
Disch · Aldiss · Sallis · Tate · and others



“MOONSTRIPS EMPIRE NEWS” Volume 1 EDUARDO PAOLOZZI

100 screenprints of images and text loose in an edition of 500 each Volume boxed, with an introduction by Christopher Finch
Image size 38 x 25.5 cm. Published by Editions Alecto, June 1967

Available The Alecto Gallery, 38 Albemarle Street, London W.1. Tel. 493-4226

Full details from Editions Alecto Ltd., 27 Kelso Place, London W.8. Tel. 937-6611

Featured in this issue of “New Worlds”

new worlds

Volume 51 Number 174

Contents

- 2 **Leading Article:** Going Down, Being There, and Coming Back
- 6 **Thomas M. Disch:** Camp Concentration
- 26 **Gene Wolfe:** The Green Wall Said
- 28 **Christopher Finch:** Eduardo Paolozzi
- 36 **James Sallis:** Kazoo
- 38 **Peter Tate:** Mars Pastorale
- 46 **Brian W. Aldiss:** Multi-Value Motorway
- 54 **Brig.-Gen. Thomas H. Crouch, USAF:** New Directions in Medicine
- 57 **Michael Butterworth:** Concentrate 1
- 59 **Books and Comment:** Thomas Elva Edison and the Novel Today
- 64 **Classified Advertisements and The Authors**

Cover images from *Moonstrips Empire News* by Eduardo Paolozzi
Illustrations by Zoline, Young, Cawthorn.

Editor: MICHAEL MOORCOCK. Associate Editor: LANGDON JONES
Design: CHARLES PLATT. Assistant Editor: DOUGLAS HILL
Advertising: CLAIRE WALSH Aeronautics Advisor: EDUARDO PAOLOZZI
Editorial contributions and assistance, Thomas M. Disch, Hilary Bailey.
NEW WORLDS is © 1967, published monthly at 87 Ladbroke Grove, London,
W.11, with the assistance of the Arts Council of Great Britain. Manuscripts
should be typewritten, double-spaced with wide margins on white, quarto
paper and accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed envelope. No
responsibility is taken for loss or damage to manuscripts or artwork.

Subscriptions 48/- per year (\$7.00) for 12 issues

Going down | Being there | & Coming back

MODERN PSYCHOLOGY EXCELS in the analysis of peripheral materials. The mechanisms of perception and reflex behaviour have been chronicled with micrometer exactness in the laboratory, while Freud and his heirs have elaborated a coherent, if sometimes fuzzy, theory of pathological behaviour. Without calling into question the very real achievements of both these schools, it can be argued that neither has yet been able to deal adequately with the single aspect of mental life that is of largest relevance to both the individual and society—the nature of the creative act. Creativity, by its nature, defies the rigid stimulus/response schema of behavioural psychology. Though the Freudians have done rather better, especially in explicating buried significances in literature and art, they have failed to demarcate the boundary between creative thought and psychosis or dreaming.

Perhaps only a creative mind of the first order is equipped to undertake the analysis of so elusive a process, and the best creative minds rarely have the background or the inclination to make the attempt. Arthur Koestler has been a notable exception, and his book, *The Act of Creation*, is the most exhaustive and informed treatment of the subject to

date. *The Hidden Order of Art** by Anton Ehrenzweig, though not as monumental, supplements Koestler's work and marks an important advance in constructing a "model" of the creative act.

All modern opinion agrees that creation is a function, in large part, of the unconscious mind. Classical ego psychology regards the unconscious as the inert, unchangeable survival of an earlier more primitive mind, where opposites merge and space and time play arbitrary tricks. While admitting the "undifferentiation" of unconscious material, Ehrenzweig challenges the notion that the unconscious is without structure. He maintains that great art will mirror this structure, and that for this reason the most basic ordering principles of art will always be a mystery to the conscious, analytic mind. The difference between a Rembrandt and a hack lies in the faithfulness with which the one captures this "hidden order" while the other can only imitate the forms perceptible to the conscious

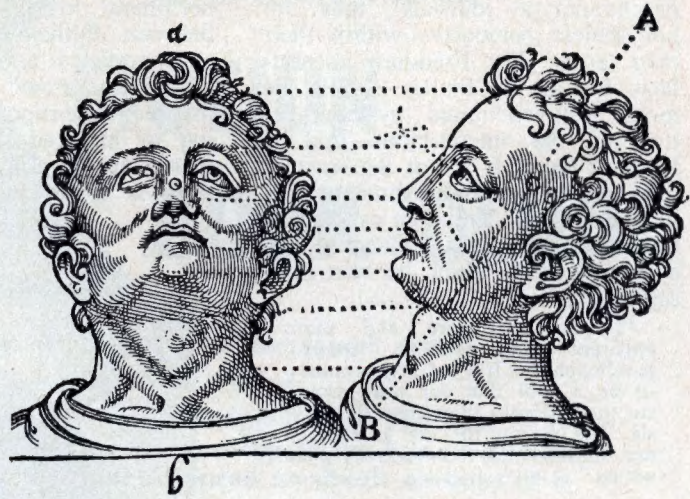
mind. This leads to a paradox:

"The undifferentiated inner fabric of art can never be fully appreciated. We transform it into something more solid and definite by the very act of perceiving it. This difficulty amounts to a genuine epistemological problem, like that involved in our incapacity for observing both movement and position of an electron. . . . The hidden structure of art is created on lower levels of awareness that are nearer to the undifferentiated techniques of the primary process. But once created it can only be observed on a higher level of awareness. In this way we are forced to observe the unconscious structure of art with the gestalt techniques of the (conscious or preconscious) secondary process which will automatically infuse a more solid and compact structure into it."

AT FIRST GLANCE this theory would seem to lead to a dead end. And indeed Ehrenzweig does not pretend to "unveil" the hidden structure of the unconscious, which must remain inaccessible. The author, who taught art at Goldsmith's College, University of London, draws much of his material from contemporary painting, but thesis is of little use in learning to "appreciate" such works, for it is the peculiarity of modern art, in his view, to speak directly to the "syncretistic" vision of the unconscious,

*The Hidden Order of Art, A Study in the Psychology of Artistic Imagination. Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1967. 306 pp. 63 shillings.

The syncretistic vision of the unconscious allows us to recognise correspondences despite difference of abstract form. In formal terms, every abstract feature of the face changes when turned from full face to profile, yet we have no difficulty recognising their syncretistic identity.



to expose the hidden structure of the unconscious to our direct view. A taste for modern art is developed only by exposing oneself to its immediate influence. When we do this we discover that our "first impression" of chaos and dissonance is gradually displaced by a sense of order and sweetness. Ehrenzweig, instead of attempting the hopeless task of explaining these works, uses them to illuminate his thesis.

This strange methodology is justified by the almost total absence of laboratory research on this subject. Art itself becomes Ehrenzweig's laboratory, a transformation that parallels the spirit of almost clinical experimentation with which so many modern artists have approached their work.

Having established the autonomy of the syncretistic vision of the unconscious, Ehrenzweig's main concern is to explore the process by which the artist establishes some degree of conscious control over it. It is just this process—the rhythmic interaction between conscious and unconscious vision, between ego and id—that sets the artist apart from the dreamer or psychotic and that determines the difference, at a more fundamental level, between sanity and insanity. For creativity is not the prerogative of genius but a pro-

cess as necessary to human life as digestion or sleep. By its agency alone can the mind change and grow. It affects even the "mechanical" processes of perception. The author illustrates this in discussing our common reluctance to "hold on to" first impressions, whether of people or works of art, preferring the mellowed, more friendly impressions of long acquaintance:

"Perception, particularly vision, secures our hold on reality. This is probably why we are so unwilling to accept the fact that perception is unstable, its data shifting and subject to the inter-play of the uncontrollable forces within our mind. . . . Yet perception has a history; it changes during our life and even within a very short span of time; more important, perception has a different structure on different levels of mental life and varies according to the level which is stimulated at one particular time. . . . These different levels of differentiations in our perception interact constantly, not only during the massive shifts between dreaming and waking, but also in the rapid pulse of differentiation and de-differentiation that goes on continually undetected in our daily lives."

EHRENZWEIG'S MODEL of the creative interaction of the conscious and unconscious mind is three-fold, and any coherent exposition of his model would be prohibi-

tively long. Briefly, the three stages can be said to be going down, being there and coming back. In the first (down) stage the ego projects fragmented aspects of itself into the work. The second stage "initiates unconscious scanning that integrates art's substructure, but may not necessarily heal the fragmentation of the surface gestalt". In the final stage the ego re-assumes conscious control and does what it can to tidy up the "de-differentiated" materials of the second stage. Each stage of the process is attended with characteristic dangers, which are suggested by Ehrenzweig's terminology: the three stages are, respectively, schizoid, manic and depressive.

Ehrenzweig's vocabulary and many of his assumptions are derived from psychoanalysis, especially in the latter half of the book when his attention turns from the plastic arts to literature. He hypothesises a relationship between the three stages of the creative act and the three stages in the myth of the "Dying God", the theme that so absorbed Sir James Frazer. Ehrenzweig holds that the perennial fascination that this theme has exerted over artists is due to the fact that the cycle of death, burial and resurrection mirror the artist's own creative ex-

perience. Though his arguments are sometimes clothed in turgid prose of orthodox psychoanalysis (much of his earlier work first appeared in psychoanalytic journals), they are nonetheless persuasive within their own terms. The Freudian vocabulary, for all its faults, is still the most well-articulated systematization of the unconscious that is ready-to-hand. It is not the least of Ehrenzweig's accomplishments that in adopting the Freudian schema he has in many ways refined it, an achievement of which he was himself aware:

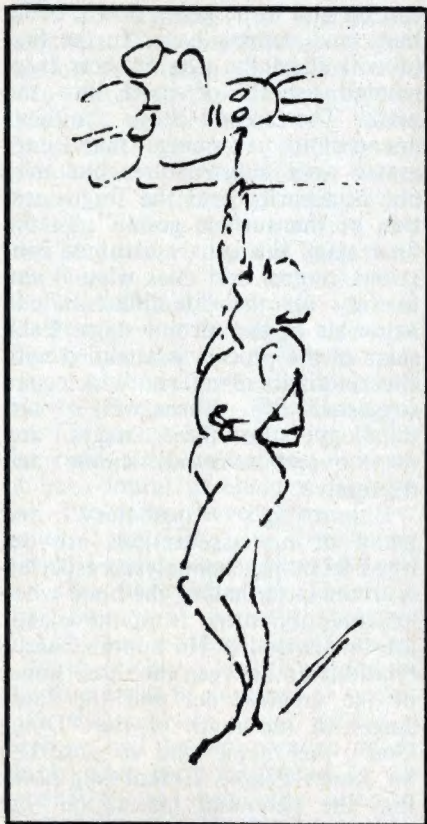
"It became more and more apparent that so-called 'applied' psychoanalysis [i.e., of art] promised to be a tool that for once would cut more deeply than clinical analysis. The reason for this is easy to see. Insanity may be creativity gone wrong."

THE FINAL TEST of the merit of any thesis is its fertility, the way it can branch out and suggest answers to a diversity of unresolved problems. By this test Ehrenzweig excels. His book contains illuminating explanations for (among other

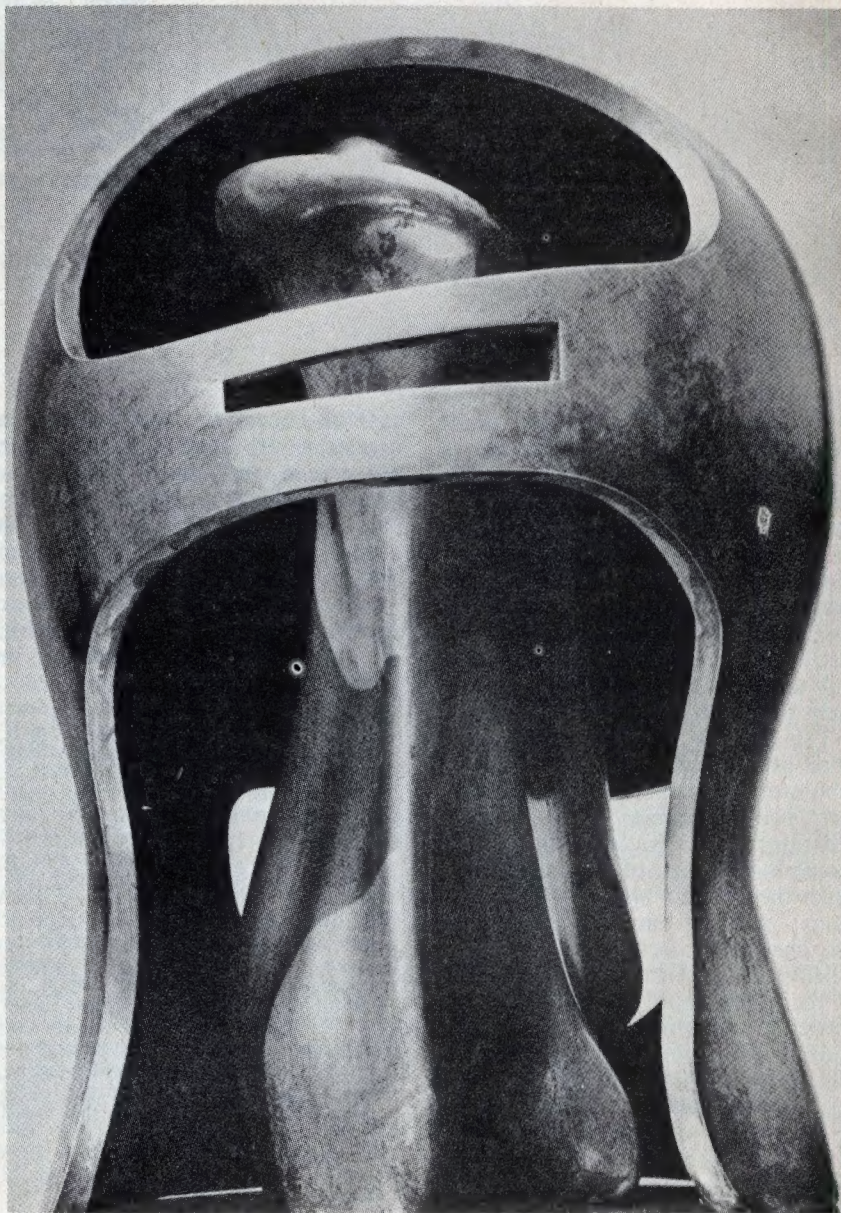
things) the anomalous simultaneity of the scientific revolution and the witch mania of the 16th and 17th centuries, the psychological "use" of peripheral vision, the relationship between Pythagorean mathematics and mysticism and the development of a "time-sense". It also abounds in practical proposals for the teaching of art and, by inference, for education in any discipline whose goal is provoking a creative re-

sponse rather than the mechanical acquisition of knowledge.

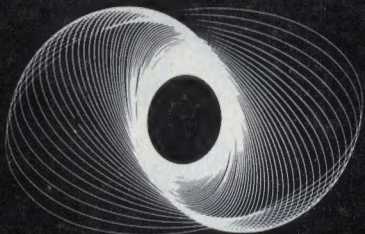
If Ehrenzweig enjoys the readership he merits, he will undoubtedly receive, as Koestler has, the high tribute of controversy. His premises are disputable, his conclusions often tenuous, but his subject is of the widest human relevance. The men who brave these regions are seldom noted, and never esteemed, for their cautiousness.



A sketch by Michelangelo that depicts Michelangelo painting the Sistine ceiling frescoes.



Henry Moore, *Helmet Head No. 5*. In the undifferentiated world of the unconscious, opposites can be resolved in an identity. Moore, in his later work, produces powerful phallic images that nevertheless preserve the womb symbolism of his early work. Yet he does not create thereby a double image but a single "undifferentiated" form analogous to the depolarised forms of the unconscious.



SCIENCE FICTION BOOK CLUB

SCIENCE FICTION BOOK CLUB, Dept. 288, 10-13 Bedford Street, London W.C.2.

Selectors: John Carnell and Dr. J. G. Porter

The writers of science fiction are giving our era its most distinctive voice. The best SF is creative, visionary, dynamic—a vital literature today. Membership of the Science Fiction Book Club enables you to receive the best SF in well-produced hardback editions at a fraction of the usual price.

JULY

A PLAGUE OF PYTHONS by Frederik Pohl
Gollancz 16s SFBC 8s

Without warning a malaise has swept over the world: people are 'possessed', completely lose control of themselves and commit all manner of atrocities. Chandler is one such 'possessed'. His search for the way to break the power that lies behind the terror leads him through secret societies, and bloody feuds... This is vintage Pohl.

AUGUST

INTERSTELLAR TWO-FIVE by John Rankine
Dobson 18s SFBC 8s

The star ship *Interstellar Two-Five* is forced to land on an apparently deserted alien planet on an unsuitable site for lift-off and with little fuel. The climax of this exciting book is as surprising and horrifying as any imagination could make it.

SEPTEMBER

SPECTRUM V An SF anthology selected and edited by Kingsley Amis and Robert Conquest
Gollancz 21s SFBC 8s

The Spectrum Science Fiction anthologies edited by Kingsley Amis and Robert Conquest have all been hailed as being unquestionably at the top of their class. Appealing both to the regular science fiction addict and the casual reader this collection presents a cross-section of science fiction ideas to tickle and stimulate every palate.

OCTOBER

OCTOBER THE FIRST IS TOO LATE by Fred Hoyle
Heinemann 18s SFBC 8s

Climbing, music, ancient Greece and the year A.D. 8000: all these play a part in this far-reaching and witty book, which teems with arresting ideas. Its central themes are time and the meaning of consciousness; around them the author of *The Black Cloud* and *Ossian's Ride* has spun a glittering web of adventure and logical surmise in a world of dual personalities and shifting time scales — all of which is entirely plausible.

NOVEMBER

THE CORRIDORS OF TIME by Poul Anderson
Gollancz 18s SFBC 8s

Malcolm Lockridge is saved from the death sentence by a beautiful woman and begins his journey through time: a journey so painful and hazardous that his original fate might well have been preferred — but there is no choice for Lockridge is committed to the goddess...

DECEMBER

MINDSWAP by Robert Sheckley
Gollancz 21s SFBC 8s

'Gentleman from Mars age 43, quiet, studious, cultured, wishes to exchange bodies with similarly inclined Earth gentleman...': Thus read a quite commonplace advertisement in a future local newspaper. 'The hero, thirsting for experience, swaps bodies with the Martian but finds that his two-timing host had already promised his frame elsewhere. Having to vacate it within six hours, the earthling (now on Mars) starts off in search for a new host...' *New Statesman*

Members may also
plunder the treasures
of the many past title
bargains still in
stock —
further details on
enrolment

JOIN HERE

To: SCIENCE FICTION BOOK CLUB, Dept. 288, 10-13 Bedford Street, London W.C.2.

- ☐ I will join the SCIENCE FICTION BOOK CLUB from (state month), buy six consecutive monthly Choices, and continue thereafter, subject to one month's notice of resignation.
- ☐ I will pay 8s (plus 1s for packing and postage) for each monthly Choice on receipt OR
- ☐ I enclose 54s for six monthly Choices (includes packing and postage).
- ☐ Please send me the long list of past titles available to members.

OVERSEAS and EIRE: Please remit in advance for a minimum of six Choices.

Signature.....

Name and address (Mr, Mrs, Miss).....

(Block letters please).....



CAMP CONCENTRATION

thomas m. disch

part two

1975. Louis Sacchetti, an American academic poet, begins a journal of his prison experiences in the Springfield Federal Penitentiary, where he is serving five years as a conscientious objector. Without explanation, he is taken by armed guards from Springfield to a mysterious subterranean barracks in one of the mountain states. He makes protests to HAAST, the prison director and a retired World War II general, who tries to reassure him by pointing out the advantages of Camp Archimedes—his relative freedom here, a well stocked library, a standard of living well above what Sacchetti is used to even outside prison. But why has he been brought here? To continue his journal, Haast explains.

For some days Sacchetti explores the labyrinthine corridors without encountering other prisoners. Then he meets GEORGE WAGNER, in appearance and manner an Iowa farmboy, though his conversation indicates a high degree of culture. The next day the Camp's psychologist, Dr. AIMEE BUSK, explains that George and the other prisoners are volunteers from Army hospitals and briggs for an experiment in "intelligence-maximization". Sacchetti has been brought in for "liaison" purposes at the suggestion of the prisoners' ringleader, MORDECAI WASHINGTON, a Negro who attended high school with Sacchetti.

He next meets Mordecai, whom the experiment has transformed from a comparative dullard into a formidable intellect. His repartee leaves Sacchetti's in the shade. Mordecai, though professedly an atheist, is enthusiastic about the alchemic researches he is undertaking. Haast shares his enthusiasm, but Busk, a determined rationalist, is scornful.

Sacchetti's last journal entry described the prisoners' rehearsal of Marlowe's *Faustus*. In the title role, George Wagner, fresh from the prison hospital, is overcome by a violent fit of vomiting. Defying Busk's earlier warning against too much curiosity, Sacchetti demands an explanation of George's illness. Mordecai explains that the drug used to accelerate intelligence has an unavoidable side effect: it causes certain death within nine months.

June 12

UP ALL NIGHT—scribble, scribble, scribble. Typically, my reaction to Mordecai's revelation has been to resile, back away, stick my head in the sand—and to write, good God, have I written! With Marlowe's pentameters still reverberating in the murky air, nothing seemed possible but blank verse. Haven't indulged in that since high school. It feels luxurious now, as I run out of fuel, just to type the lines over in stout columns down the page, like caressing fur:

Ripe as a cage of doves, the rented child,

With shards of clay pots clinking at each step,

Stinking of cheap chrism, astride a goat. . . .

I haven't the least notion what it's all about (the fog is thick) though the title (obscurely) is "The Hierodule". A hierodule, as I discovered last week going through the OED, is a temple slave.

I feel like a goddamned Coleridge, and one whom no visitor from Porlock ever came knocking out of the trance. It began, innocently enough, when I resurrected the aborted "Ceremony" poems of a year ago, but the only connection with those pious trifles is the opening image of the priest entering the temple-labyrinth:

. . . Turning left, turning right, grasping at eyes

Lovely as a god's. The blood flutters into the pool. . . .

Then, within ten lines it degenerates (or ascends?) into something that wholly defies my powers of synopsis, much less analysis. Pagan it is, most certainly, and perhaps heretical as well. I would never dare let it be published under my own name. Published! I'm too giddy yet to know if the damned thing scans, much less whether it's publishable.

But I have the feeling, which comes after a good poem, that everything else I've ever done is dross in comparison. This, for instance—the description of the idol:

Behold! behold the black, ungrained flesh,
The jaw's jewelled hinge that we can barely glimpse

While, within, the poison'd hierodule,
Dying, whispers what the god had meant. . . .
I wish he'd whisper it to me though.
110 lines!

I feel as though a week has gone by since I sat down yesterday afternoon to start to work at it.

June 13

George Wagner is dead. The sealed casket, freighted with what scraps of flesh the clinic has no use for, was fitted into a slot crudely dug into the native rock of this place, our very own mausoleum. Myself, the other prisoners and three guards attended, but neither Haast nor Busk nor yet any chaplain. Were there chaplains at Ravensbruck, do you suppose? To my own and the general embarrassment, I mouthed some hollow prayers, sad as lead. Unascended, I imagine they are lying still on the rough floor of the crypt.

The hypogeum, half-lit, with its twenty-odd unfilled niches, possessed for the prisoners (like the rows of coffin-beds in a Carthusian monastery) the inexpugnable fascination of a memento mori. It was this morbid impulse, I suspect, rather than any pious feeling for the dead, that had brought them to the inhumation.

As the others filed out the door into the geometric calm of our corridor-world, Mordecai laid a hand upon the stone wall (not chill, as one expects of stone, but warm as living flesh) and said, "Breccia". I had thought he had been going to say, "Goodbye".

"Let's get a move on," one of the guards said. I've been here long enough now that I can sort out the faces and persons of the guards; this was Rock-Eye. His fellows were Fartpuff and Assiduous.

Mordecai stooped to pick off the floor a fist-sized chunk of stone. Assiduous removed his sidearm from its holster. Mordecai laughed: "I'm not inciting to riot, Mister Patrolman, honest I'm not. I'd just like this pretty piece of breccia for my rock collection." He pocketed it.

"Mordecai," I said. "About what you told me after the rehearsal. . . . How long will it be before you . . . how long do you expect to. . . ?"

Mordecai, standing already at the threshold, turned, silhouetted by the fluorescence of the corridor. "I'm in my seventh month now," he said evenly. "Seven months and ten days. Which gives me another fifty days—unless I'm premature." He stepped down from the sill of the door and turned to the left, out of sight.

"Mordecai," I said, staring after him.

Rock-Eye blocked my path. "Not just now, Mr. Sacchetti, if you please. You have an appointment to

see Dr. Busk." Fartpuff and Assiduous stepped into position on either side of me. "If you'll just follow me?"

"It was a very foolish, a very unwise and a very injudicious thing to do," Dr. Aimée Busk repeated in grave, guidance-counsellor tones. "Oh, not the matter of asking after poor young George—because, as you point out, we wouldn't have been able to keep that aspect of the situation hidden from you much longer in any case. We had been hoping, you see, to discover an . . . antidote. But we find that the process, once begun, is irreversible. Alas. No, it is not *that* I was speaking of, because for all you may protest about what you choose to call our inhumanity, there is ample precedent for what we're about. Throughout its history, medical research has paid for its progress with the blood of martyrs."

She paused, pleased with the resonance.

"What is it then, if not that, that you called me in here to be scolded for?"

"For that very foolish, very unwise, very injudicious little research expedition in the library."

"You keep a sharp lookout."

"Well, of course. Will you excuse me if I smoke? Thank you." She fitted a crumbling Camel into a stubby plastic cigarette holder, once transparent, now stained to the same deep brown as her middle and forefinger.

"But whether I looked into *Who's Who* now or after I was released, you'll have to admit that the information is easily come by."

What I had found in *Who's Who* (there is no reason why I shouldn't mention it *now*) had been the identity of the corporation that employs Haast as Vice-President in charge of Research &

[Here two lines have been defaced from the manuscript of Louis Sacchetti's journal. Ed.]

"Bad faith? Deception?" Dr. Busk said, gently remonstrating. "If there's been any deception, then you've certainly been as much a party to it as I. But isn't it really more a question of morale? We've just been trying to keep you cheered up, so that your work needn't be hampered with needless anxietization."

"So in fact from the first you've never had any intention of releasing me from Camp Archimedes?"

"Never? Oh, now you're dramatising. Of course we'll let you out. Some time or other. When the climate of opinion is right. When the experiment has justified itself to our p-r department. *Then* we can return you to Springfield. And since we'll almost certainly reach that point within the next five years—within as many months, more likely—you should be grateful for the opportunity to spend that time here, in the very van of progress, rather than there, where you were so bored."

"Yes, I really ought to thank you for the chance to witness all your murders. Yes indeed."

"Well, of course . . . if that's how you *will* regard it. But you should know by now, Mr. Sacchetti, that the world sees things differently than you do. If you should

try to make a scandal about Camp Archimedes, you'll probably find yourself as little heeded as you were little heeded at your trial. Oh, you'll find a few fellow paranooids to listen to your brave speeches, but on the whole people just won't take conchies seriously, you know."

"On the whole, people don't take their consciences seriously."

"A different hypothesis, but it fits the same set of facts, doesn't it?" Dr. Busk raised a miniscule, ironic eyebrow and then (as though that had been the necessary bootstrap) herself from the low leather seat. Her crisp grey dress, smoothed by her nervous hands, whispered electrically. "Is there anything else, Mr. Sacchetti?"

"You had said, when the subject first arose, that you would explain more fully the action of this drug, this Pallidine."

"So I did, so I shall." She sat back down in the web of black leather, groomed her pale lips into a teacherly smile, and expositied:

"The causative agent of the disease—though is it fair, actually, to call it a disease, when it does so much good?—is a little bug, a spirochaete, nearly related to the *Treponema pallidum*. You've heard it referred to as 'Pallidine' here, a name that rather glosses over the fact that the agent infecting the host is, unlike most pharmaceuticals, living, self-reproducing. In short, a bug.

"Perhaps you've heard tell of the *Treponema pallidum*? Or, as it may also be called, the *Spirochaetae pallida*? No? Well, you know it well enough by its fruits. *Treponema pallidum* is the initiator of syphilis. Ah, there's the old shock of recognition, eh!

"The particular bug we have to deal with here is something of a sport, a latter-day offshoot of a subgroup known as the Nicols variety, which was isolated in 1912 from the infected brain of a syphilitic man and kept alive thereafter in the bloodstreams of bunny rabbits. Countless generations of Nicols treponemes spawned themselves in those laboratory rabbits, and always they were accorded the most intensive investigation—one might almost say reverence. Especially since 1949. In '49 Nelson and Mayer, two fellow Americans, developed the T.P.I., the single finest diagnostic test for the disease. All this, by the by. The troponeme that has done in young George is at least as different from the Nicols treponeme as that is from your garden-variety *Treponema pallidum*.

"It shouldn't astonish you to learn that by far the most active researcher into the little world of the spirochaete has been the Armed Services. Many a good fighting man has been defeated by that microscopic enemy, until, of course, the Second World War and the advent of penicillin. Even then, research was not abandoned. About five years ago an Army team was investigating—on rabbits, naturally—the possible utility of radiation as a therapeutic tool in cases where the usual penicillin treatment can't be used, or when (about 3% of the time) it doesn't take. A curious situation was observed

—the experiment seemed to have produced a new blood-line of rabbits. A blood-line, that is to say, not in the reproductive sense, but rather the succession of rabbits who receive blood—and treponemes—from each other. One particular line of rabbits developed not only the typical orchitis, but they seemed to have become, despite the ravages of the disease, quite *shrewd*. Several times they escaped from their cages. Their performances in Skinner boxes surpassed anything that had ever been recorded. I was in charge of their testing, and I can assure you it was a *most* astonishing achievement. Well that, of course, was the discovery of Pallidine. Three more years were to go by before anything was to be made of that discovery. Three years!

"Under the microscope Pallidine looks much the same as any other spirochaete. It is, as the name suggests, spiral in shape, with seven coils; the average *Treponema pallidum* is much larger, though it may have as few as six coils in rare instances. If you'd like to see one, I'm sure. . . . No? They're really rather pretty. They propel themselves by stretching out lengthwise, concertina-fashion, then contracting. Very graceful. 'Sylph-like' is what the textbooks call it. I've spent entire hours just watching them swim about in plasma.

"Oh, there are a host of differences between *Treponema pallidum* and Pallidine, but what it is *exactly* that gives the latter its special potency we've not been able to determine. Syphilis in its late stages is notorious for its attacks on the central nervous system. For instance, when the spirochaetae have worked their way into the spinal cord—and this may be quite twenty years after the initial infection—you get tabes dorsalis—that's the most common effect, and very nasty. You don't know tabes? Well, it's true that nowadays one sees less of it. It starts out by just making the legs wobble, then the joints swell and melt until they can afford no support whatever, and finally about 10% of those who get it go blind. That's tabes, but when the spirochaetes get to the brain—they work their way up the spinal cord osmotically, rather the way sap rises in a tree—that's when you get general paresis, which has a much more interesting pathology. Several well-known cases would appeal to you, as an artist: Donizetti, Gauguin and, not least, the philosopher Nietzsche, who signed his last letters from the asylum, 'Dionysius'."

"No poets of note?" I asked.

"As a matter of fact, the disease received its name from a poet: Fracastorius, who wrote a pastoral in 1530, in Latin verse, about the shepherd Syphilis, a lovesick swain. I've never read it myself, but if you'd like. . . ? Then, too, there are the Goncourts, Abbé Galiani, Hugo Wolf. . . . But the supreme and undying example of what the *Treponema pallidum* can accomplish is Adolph Hitler.

"Now, if the spirochaete accomplished nothing more in the brain than this sort of havoc—deliriums and disintegration—Camp Archimedes would not exist. But it has been suggested—and by some very reputable people

(though they were not usually in the medical line)—that neuro-syphilis is as often beneficent as it is at other times malign, that the geniuses I've mentioned (and many others that I might add) were as much its beneficiaries as its victims.

"It is all a question, finally, of the nature of genius. The best explanation of genius that I know, the one that incorporates most of the facts we have, is Koestler's: that the act of genius is simply the bringing together of two hitherto distinct spheres of reference, or matrices—a talent for juxtapositions. Archimedes' bath is a small instance: till him no one had associated measurements of mass with the commonplace observation of water displacement. The question is, for a modern investigator, what actually takes place *in the brain* at the moment that an Archimedes says, 'Eureka!' It seems clear, now, that it is a sort of breakdown—literally, the mind disintegrates, and the old, distinct categories are for a little while fluid and capable of re-formation."

"But it's just that," I objected, "the re-formation of the disrupted categories, in which the act of genius consists. It's not the breakdown that counts, but the new juxtapositions that follow. Madmen can break down just as spectacularly as geniuses."

Dr. Busk smiled, enigmatic in her veil of cigarette smoke. "Perhaps that thin line that is said to separate genius from madness is only fortuitous; perhaps the madman simply has the bad luck of being wrong. But your point is taken, and I can reply to it. You would suggest, I take it, that genius is only one per cent inspiration, that the process of preparing for the moment when the 'Eureka!' comes is what is crucial in the formation of genius. In short, his education, by which he becomes acquainted with reality."

"But doesn't that just beg the question? Education, memory itself, is but the recapitulation of all the moments of genius in that culture. Education is always breaking down old categories and recombining them in better ways. And who has a better memory, strictly speaking, than the catatonic who resurrects some part of the past in all its completeness, annihilating the present moment utterly? I might go so far as to say that thought itself is a disease of the brain, a degenerative condition of matter."

"Why, if genius were a *continuous* process, instead of what it is—a fluke—it would be of no value to us whatever! Geniuses in a field like mathematics are usually played out by thirty, at the very latest. The mind defends itself against the disintegrative process of creativity; it begins to jell; notions solidify into unalterable *systems*, which simply refuse to be broken down and re-formed. Consider Owens, the great anatomist of the Victorian age, who simply *wouldn't* understand Darwin. It's self-preservation, pure and simple."

"And then think of what happens if genius *doesn't* rein itself in but insists on plunging on ahead into the chaos of freest association. I'm thinking of that hero of

you literateurs, James Joyce. I know any number of psychiatrists who could, in good conscience, have accepted *Finnegan Wakes* as the very imprimatur of madness and had its author hospitalized on its evidence alone. A genius? Oh yes. But all we common people have the commonsense to realize that genius, like the clap, is a social disease, and we take action accordingly. We put all our geniuses in one kind or another of isolation ward, to escape being infected.

"If you need any further proof of what I'm saying, then look about you. We have geniuses on every hand here, and what is their chief concern? To what noble purpose do they apply the vast stock of their combined intelligences? To the study of chimeras! To alchemy!

"Oh, I'm sure that no one, not Dr. Faustus himself, has ever applied a keener intelligence, a finer discernment, or a profounder awareness to the hermetic arts. As Mordecai is always ready to point out, centuries of the cleverest riddle-makers and the slyest obscurantists have busied themselves elaborating these intellectual arabesques. It is quite *deep* enough for the tallest mind to drown in. But for all that, it's a pack of nonsense, as you and I and Mordecai Washington perfectly well know."

"Haast doesn't seem to think so," I said mildly.

"As we also all are well aware, Haast is a damned fool," Busk said, stubbing out her Camel, which she had smoked down to the plastic holder.

"Oh, I wouldn't say that," I said.

"Because he reads your journal—as I do. You can't very well deny what you've already written there. You've said what you think of Mordecai's ideas and the ways he's snowing Haast."

"Perhaps I've a broader mind than you'd like to give me credit for. I'll reserve my judgement on Mordecai's theories, if it's all the same to you."

"You're a bigger hypocrite than I'd thought, Sacchetti. Believe any nonsense you like, and tell whatever lies you have a mind to. It makes no difference to me. I'll have my showdown with that charlatan soon enough."

"How so?" I asked.

"It's all scheduled. I'll see you have a ringside ticket for the main event."

"When is it to be?"

"Why, on Midsummer's Eve. When else?"

Later:

A handwritten note from Haast: "Good for you, Louie! Stick up for your rights! We'll show that smart-assed bitch a thing or two next week. You'd better believe it!

"All the best,
"H.H."

June 15

This is your old friend Louie too (or, popularly, Louis the Likewise) with wonderful new news for all you sufferers from angst and angina, for the conscience-

ridden and God-plagued, for the psychosomatic and the simply stigmatic. You can throw away that truss! Because, mon semblable, mon frère, there is nothing but an aching emptiness at the centre of things, alleluia! And not even aching any more, no, the void is happy as the day is long. *That* is the secret that those ancients possessed, that is the truth that will make us free, you and me. Say it three times in the morning and three times at night: There is no God, there never was and never will be, world without end, amen.

Would you deny it, old Adamite, Louie I? Then let me recommend you to your own poem, the poem you claimed not to be able to understand. *I* understand it: the idol is empty; his speech, an imposture. There is no Baal, my friend, only the whisperer within, putting your words in His mouth. A farrago of anthropomorphism. Deny it! Not all your piety nor wit, my boy!

And o! o! those precious, fawning poems of yours, licking the golden ass of your let's-pretend God-daddy. What shit, eh? Years and years of it, piling it on, like the birdy (Augustine's, isn't it?) that tried to move a mountain, a pebble at a time, each time a chilead, and when the last granule had been translated not an eye-blink of eternity had gone by. But *you*, sparrowfart, didn't even attack mountains. The *Hills* of Switzerland—and then, for a sequel? The Turds of the Vatican?

Ha, I hear, as from a great distance, your mild protest: The fool says in his heart there is no God.

And the wise man says it aloud.

Later, much later:

I need not explain, I think, that I've been feeling poorly today and yesterday. I have remarked already in this journal, I think, that I had thought Dr. Mieris had cured me of my megrims. I had also thought he'd cured me of such scherzoes as the above represents.

Think.

Thought.

Thunk.

The ground is still quaggy, and though I am myself again, it doesn't feel quite permanent, this self-possession. I am sackless, wearied by *his* excesses, and my head hurts; it is late.

I have been walking the corridors, corridors, corridors. Considering what Busk had to say, until I was forced to consider the graver matters brought forward by Louie II. To him I make no reply, as that devil is as good a theologian as I, tautologically.

Silence, then. But isn't silence tantamount, almost, to admitting defeat? Alone and unhoused, I lack grace: that is all that is the matter.

O God, simplify these equations!

June 16

"*Morituri te salutamus*," Mordecai said, opening the door, grinning, to which I, all lacklustre, had no better reply than a thumbs-up sign.

"*Quid nunc?*" he asked, closing the door—a question

I felt even less competent to answer. Indeed, the whole purpose of my visit was to avoid confronting myself with the problem of What-now.

"Charity," I replied. "What other reason would I have for lightening your gloomy cell?" A fey touch, which, falling flat, only heaped on more gloom.

"A base of charity," Mordecai said, "neutralizes the acids of self-doubt."

"Do you get copies of my journal too?" I asked.

"No, but I see a lot of Haast, and we worry about you. You wouldn't write something in your journal, you know, that you really wanted to keep a secret, so there's no reason to make faces. Your problem, Sacchetti, is intellectual pride. You like to make a fucking song-and-dance out of every spiritual itch and tremble you get. Now, what I'd suggest, if you're going to lose your faith is that you goddam-well go to a dentist and have it *pulled*. It only hurts if you keep playing with it."

"But I came here to interest myself in *your* problems, Mordecai. I want just to forget my own."

"Yes, yes. Well then, make yourself at home. I've enough problems for both of us." He whistled shrilly, and called: "Ops! Mopsi! Cottontail! Come and shake hands with your new little brother." He turned back to address me: "May I present my three familiars? My fire-drakes?"

Out of the sweltering darkness of the room (lighted only by two candles on a table against the far wall, and a third that M. held in his hand) three rabbits came hopping forward cautiously. One was an unblemished white, the other two piebald.

"Opsi," Mordecai said. "Shake hands with my friend Donovan."

I crouched low, and the white rabbit hopped two hops closer, sniffed perspicaciously, raised itself on its hind feet and extended its right forepaw, which I took between thumb and forefinger to shake.

"How do you do, Opsi," I said.

Opsi withdrew his furry paw from my grasp and backed off.

"Opsi?" I asked Mordecai.

"Short for opsimath—one who begins to learn late in life. We're all opsimaths here. Now Mopsi, it's your turn."

The second rabbit, speckled brown and black, advanced. When it had reared itself on its hind legs I could see what appeared to be udders on its underbelly, though of quite disproportionate size. I pointed these out to M.

"It's the orchitis, you know—inflammation of the testicles. That's the price *they* pay for being so bright."

I let go Mopsi's paw abruptly, startling all three rabbits back to their hidlings in the dark room.

"Oh, don't worry about germs. Only if you were to put that finger in your mouth. . . . Spirochaetae need a warm, damp place to grow. That's what makes venereal disease so venereal. You can disinfect yourself in my can, but first, can't I call Cottontail back? He must be

feeling quite insecure, the way you've scanted him."

Reluctantly I shook hands with Cottontail. Afterwards I washed with soap and cold water.

"Where's Peter?" I asked, lathering a second time.

"Farmer MacGregor got to him," Mordecai answered from the obscurity. "The rabbits don't last as long as we do. Two, three weeks, and then, Phut!"

Returning to the larger room from the fluorescent bath, I was temporarily blinded. "You should try gaslight, Mordecai. A wonderful invention of this modern age."

"In fact I *have* gaslight on days when my eyes aren't on the blink. But days like today a bright light would go through my tender jellies like a hail of needles. Shall I tell you about my other diseases? Will you commiserate?"

"If it would be any comfort to you."

"Oh, an Egyptian comfort. For the first two months there was nothing that seems particularly memorable *now*: a few gumboils, a rash, swellings—nothing that any practised hypochondriac couldn't do for himself. Then, in the third month, I came down with laryngitis, concurrently with an over-riding enthusiasm for mathematics. A convenient hobby for mutes, eh? Soon afterward my liver started to decay and the whites of my eyes turned yellow. Ever since I've been living on mashed potatoes, boiled fruit, fancy desserts and all that kind of puke. No meat, no fish, no liquor. Not that I very much want liquor. I mean, I don't need more mental stimulation than I've got, do I? During the hepatitis was when I had my first big literary kick and learned French and German—and when I wrote that story that I still haven't shown you. Don't leave this room without you take that story with you—you hear, Sacchetti?"

"I'd already intended to ask you for it."

"By the fourth month I was just one bundle of ills. The difficulty in describing them is that in a retrospective narration I give my diseases too crisp edges. In the event phases blurred and overlapped. Gumboils and rashes didn't stop just because something else started, and there've been obscure cramps and sudden squitters and jactitations that came and left in a day or an hour. With all the symptoms I've had at one time or another, I've just about exhausted *Hasting's Encyclopaedia of Pathology*."

"*Of Religion and Ethics*, isn't it?"

"I've exhausted that too."

"But *when*? When have you fitted in all this education? That's what I can't understand. Where did you find the time, in seven months, to pick up . . . everything?"

"Sit down, Sacchetti, and I'll tell you all about it. But do me a favour first—bring me that thermos on my desk. That's a good sport."

My eyes had adjusted to the half-light of the room, and I could make my way to the table unstumbling. A sweating thermos lay upon a TOP SECRET file folder of

the sort Haast had sent to me. Its wet base had made a ringstain on the stiff paper.

"Thanks," Mordecai said, taking the thermos and uncorking it. He was half-reclined on a low divan of striped silk, propped up with a ratchet of small soft cushions. One of the piebald rabbits had come to cuddle in his crotch.

He drank from the thermos noisily. "I'd offer you some, but. . . ."

"Thanks just the same. I'm not thirsty."

"The question, you see, isn't how do I do it, but how do I *stop* doing it. I don't stop doing it, and that's half my misery. In my worst moments, with my head in the pisser, retching, the old brain jelly goes right on fermenting, oblivious to the low soma. No, not oblivious: just indifferent, aloof, a spectator. I become more intrigued with the fauve colours of my heavings or the chemistry of stomach acids than with the merely local miseries of my guts. I'm always thinking, speculating, figuring. It never stops, that brain jelly, just as the heart or the lungs don't stop. Even sitting here talking, my mind is flying off on tangents, into vortices, trying to tie all the loose ends of the universe into a single knot of consciousness. It doesn't fucking stop. At night I need injections before I can sleep, and asleep I dream technicolour nightmares of exemplary and, as far as I know, wholly original terror. Quite cud-blurbling. That's a spoonerism, somewhat."

"Yes, I noticed."

"One thing, though—one thing *will* stop it for a little while: when I am seized. Then I am happily blank for an hour after."

"You have seizures too?"

"At closer intervals. They are the labour pains with which I prepare to deliver my spirit to the void. Aortitis—that's the latest inside story. My aorta is de-elasticized and now, I understand, the valve is going. Blood leaks back into the left ventricle at every stroke, and the old ticker (as we fondly call it) speeds up to compensate. But soon enough—Phut! One more little rabbit lost in the lists of science." He laid two heavy black hands upon the nestling rabbit and closed his eyes. "Isn't it pathetic?"

Without rising from the hassock, I occupied the time (become suddenly vacant, like a punctured Gemini capsule that loses its air in one quick *Whuppf!*) with a silent survey of Mordecai's room. Only as large as mine, its enfouledered darkness created an illusion of indefinite spaciousness, out of which arose, intermittently, the hypotheses of furniture. Faustian bookshelves rose to the ceiling on all the walls except where the divan stood, above which hung a copy of the Ghent altarpiece, its disparities from the original masked by the benign obscurity.

Near the overburdened worktable (which occupied almost the whole of what in the arrangement of my room was the sleeping el) was a mechanical apparatus or stabile sculpture, some four feet high, that consisted of

several upthrusting rods, tipped with small metallic balls that glinted in the candlelight, surrounding a central, larger globe, goldenly gleaming: all these elements bounded in an imaginary sphere defined by the two thick circumscriptive bands of iron.

"That?" Mordecai said. "That's my orrery. Built to my own specifications. The several motions of each little moon and planet is regulated by sub-sub-sub-to-the-nth-miniaturized radio elements within. Straight from the pages of *Popular Electronics*, isn't it?"

"But what is it for?"

"It holds the mirror up to nature—isn't that enough? I did dabble in astrology once upon a time, but even then it had no more than symbolic significance. For the real work there's an observatory upstairs. Ah, did your eyes light up with speculations then? Glimmerings of a Great Escape? Forget it, Sacchetti. *We* never get beyond a little planetarium, to which the telescope's images are broadcast by closed-circuit TV."

"You say 'once upon a time'. Does that mean you've given astrology up?"

Mordecai sighed. "Life is so short. There isn't room for everything. Think of all the broads I'll never lay now, the songs I'll never dance to. And I would have liked a chance to go to Europe too and have a quick look-see at all the things I've been reading about. Culture. But it wasn't in my stars. I'll always envy you that trip to Europe. All the places I'd like to go. Rome, Florence, Venice. English cathedrals. Mont St. Michel. The Escorial. Bruges and—" With a gesture to the gilt-framed picture of the bleeding lamb. "—Ghent. Everywhere, in fact, but where you *did* go, you dumb bastard. Switzerland and Germany! Jesus Christ, what were you fucking around *there* for? I mean, what are mountains? They're warts on the face of the Earth. And as for anything *north* of the Alps. . . . Well, I was stationed four years just outside Heidelberg, and as far as I'm concerned Europe stops at the Rhine. The best proof of which is the fact that I enjoyed every beer-swilling, dumpling-sodden minute of my leaves. Except when the locals stared too much at my to-them-amazing pigmentation and I got to feeling like a left-over from Buchenwald. Deutschland!" Mordecai concluded his commination with such vehemence that the rabbit scampered from his lap in terror. "I'd as soon take a vacation in Mississippi."

This led to a few reminiscences on my part of my Fulbright year, pleasant enough to recount but beside the point here, together with a guilty précis of my reasons (literary, musical) for having quit Europe for Germany (a distinction I tacitly acknowledged).

"Rilke, Schmilke!" Mordecai said when I'd finished. "You can read *books* here. Admit it—the fascination of Germany in this century is the fascination of the abomination. You go there to catch a whiff of the smoke that still hangs in the air. Tell me one thing—did you make a sidetrip to Dachau, or didn't you?"

I had, and told him. He wanted me to describe the

town and the camp, and I complied. His appetite for detail was greater than my memory could satisfy, though I surprised myself with the circumstantiality I was able to muster: it's been a long while since I'd been there.

"I only asked," Mordecai said, when he was convinced the wells of memory were dry, "because I've been dreaming about death camps lately. An understandable preoccupation, wouldn't you say? Admittedly, it's only an analogy to our little home in the west here. Except that I'm a prisoner and except that I'm marked for extermination, *I* can't complain. And isn't everybody, after all?"

"A prisoner? I often get that feeling—yes."

"No, I meant marked for slaughter. The difference is I've had the bad luck to sneak a look at the execution orders, while most people walk off to the ovens thinking they're going to take a shower." He laughed harshly, turning sideways on the divan, to see me better, as I now stood on the other side of the room, by the clockwork of the orrery.

"It isn't just Germany," he said. "And it isn't just Camp Archimedes. It's the whole universe. The whole goddamned universe is a fucking concentration camp."

Mordecai rolled back into the pile of tasseled cushions, coughing and laughing at once, knocking the half-filled thermos over on the Persian carpet that covered the tiled floor. He caught it up, found it empty and with a curse flung it across the room, rupturing a panel of the painted screen partitioning one corner of the room.

"Push the button beside the door, will you, Sacchetti? I need some more of the sickening sugarwater they call coffee here. That's a good sport."

Almost immediately I'd rung, a black-uniformed guard (Fartpuff it was) arrived with a coffee wagon laden with pastries, from which Mordecai made selections. To me another attendant handed three Spode bowls filled with fresh carrot slices.

Mordecai pushed back the detritus of books and papers from the edge of his worktable, making room for our saucers and the tray of pastries. He bit into a large chocolate éclair, squirting whipped cream from the other end onto a sheet of typed numbers.

"I keep wishing," he said, his mouth full, "that it were meat."

The rabbits meanwhile had climbed atop the desk and were nibbling their carrots discreetly. Even in candlelight I could see the distinct spoor of quitters that they had trailed across the open books and SECRET file folders.

"Feel free, feel free," Mordecai said, helping himself to a piece of cheesecake.

"Thank you, but really I'm not hungry."

"Don't mind me then. I am."

I did my best not to mind him, but to do so it was necessary to turn my attention elsewhere, and so for the space of two cups of coffee and four large pastries I

was able to do a random sampling of the uppermost deposits on Mordecai's worktable. The following inventory needs must omit all that lay outside the three circles of candlelight, as well as whatever earlier Troys of thought were buried below.

I saw:

Several books on alchemy—the *Tabula smargdina*, Benedictus Figulus' *A golden and blessed casket of Nature's marvels*, Geber's *Works*, Poisson's *Nicolas Flamel*, etc.—many in the last stages of picturesqueness;

Tables of random numbers;

3 or 4 electronics texts—the largest, *DNA Engineering* by California Tech's Wunderkind Kurt Vreden, in typescript with an enticing CONFIDENTIAL label pasted to the cardboard binder;

Several colour plates torn from Skira art books, chiefly of works of the Flemish masters, though there was a detail from Raphael's *School of Athens* and a tattered print of Dürer's woodcut, *Melancholia*;

A plastic skull, very decorative, with paste-glass ruby eyes;

Enid Starkie's biography of Rimbaud, and Pléiade edition of the poet's works;

Volume IV of *Hasting's Encyclopaedia*, onto the open pages of which Mordecai (or one of the rabbits?) had overturned an inkbottle;

Wittgenstein's *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, with some of the same ink on its leather binding (I recall now, as I make this inventory, what use Luther made of inkpots);

Yarrowsticks;

Several file folders, of various colours, orange, tan, grey, black, their typed labels seldom legible in the poor light, except the nearest—*Expense Book* by G. Wagner. From the pages of this (whether proper to it and falling out or only a bookmark, I cannot say) projected a crackly vellum sheet with a crude drawing on it, in coloured inks, not much superior to an average men's room graffito. That part of the drawing that I could see represented a crowned and bearded man holding a tall sceptre upon which were mounted, one above the other, six further crowns. The king stood upon an odd pedestal that grew flowerlike from a vine that branched, above the king's head, into a sort of lattice. At the interstices of this lattice were six other male heads, lower, lesser types, and beside each head a letter of the alphabet, from D through I. The left-hand portion of this head-bearing vine curled out of sight into George's closed book;

And, covering all else, heaps of Mordecai's short-hand scribbblings, among which were several drawings even more crudely rendered than the one I've just described.

End of inventory.

EXCEPT FOR OCCASIONAL abstracted endearments to the rabbits (which, finished with their own snack,

sniffed at the pastry plate), Mordecai was quiet while he gorged on the pastries. After a final strawberry tart, however, he became talkative again, not to say manic:

"Is it hot enough for you? I really ought to turn down the oven when company comes, but then I get the shivers. Would you like to see a genuine philosophical egg? No alchemist can be without one. Of course you would. Come—I'll unveil all the mysteries for you today."

I followed him to the farther, screened corner of the room and noticed how, as we approached, the heat increased. By the squat, tiled furnace that the screen had concealed the air was heated to sauna temperatures.

"Lo!" Mordecai intoned. "The athanor!"

From a shelf on the wall he took down two heavy face shields, handing one to me. "These are for when the nuptial chamber is opened," he explained, poker-faced. "You'll have to excuse my athanor: it's electric, which isn't quite comme il faut," (pronounced by Mordecai, come-ill-phut) "I'll admit, but it's much easier this way to maintain a fire that is vaporous, digesting, continuous, non-violent, subtle, encompassed, airy, obstructive and corrupting. We pursue the traditional ends of alchemy here, but I've taken a few liberties with some of the means we employ.

"Now, if you'll put on that mask, I can let you peek into mother's belly, as it's fondly known in the trade."

The mask's eye-slits were shielded with tinted glass. Putting it on in the dark room I was, effectually, blinded.

"Ecce," Mordecai said, and the top of the tiled furnace slid aside with a mechanical whirr, exposing the glowing concavity, within which stood a darkly-gleaming, oblate object about two feet high—the philosophical egg (or, prosaically, a retort). It was about as interesting as a Dutch oven, which it somewhat resembled.

The lid hummed shut, and I slipped the sweat-wet mask from my face.

"A log fire *would* have been more spooky," I said.

"The end justifies the means. This is going to *work*."

"Mm," I said, returning to my hassock on the other side of the room, where it was a moderate 90°.

"It *will* work," he insisted, following.

"What exactly are you cooking in your big pot? Transmuting a base metal to gold? Poetic associations apart, what's the use? There are many elements these days rarer than gold. Hasn't it become a rather quixotic ambition in this post-Keynesian age?"

"I made that very point to Haast some months ago, when the experiment was being designed. Accordingly, the Metallic Opus is only a step on our way, the ultimate goal being the distillation of an elixir for our joint benefit." Mordecai smiled. "An elixir of long life."

"Of youth, I'd thought it was called."

"That, of course, is its fascination for Haast."

"And how is this potion being brewed? I suppose your recipe is a close-kept secret."

"In some particulars, yes, though it can be rooted

out from Geber and Paracelsus. But really, Sacchetti, would you *want* to know? Would you risk salvation to find out? Would you want me to risk mine? Raymond Lully says, 'I swear to you upon my soul that if you reveal this, you shall be damned'. Of course, if you'll be content with an inspecific account. . . ."

"Whatever Isis is willing to unveil."

"The philosophical egg—the big pot that you saw in the athanor—contains an electuary dissolved in water, which for the past ninety-four days has been exposed alternately to the heat of telluric fires during the day, and at night to the light of the star Sirius. Properly speaking, gold is not a metal; it is light. Sirius has always been thought especially efficacious in operations of this sort, but in past ages it was difficult to capture the Sirian light in a pure state, as the light from neighbouring stars was apt to adulterate it, minorating its special properties. Here a radio telescope is employed to insure the necessary homogeneity. Did you see the lens sealed into the top of the egg? That focuses the pure beam upon the bride and groom within, sulphur and mercury."

"I thought you were after Sirian light. You're getting radio waves."

"So much the better. It's only human frailty that draws a distinction between radio and light waves. If we were only spiritual enough, we'd see the radio waves too. But to return—in nine and ninety days, on the Eve of Midsummer, the sepulchre will be opened, and the elixir decanted. But you shouldn't laugh, you know. It spoils the whole effect."

"I'm sorry. I try not to, but you're really so expert at this. I keep thinking of Ben Jonson."

"You think I'm not serious."

"Terrifically serious. And the stage effects are better than anything George came up with for *Doctor Faustus*: those jars of foetuses in the bookcase, that chalice . . . it's consecrated, of course?"

Mordecai nodded.

"I knew it. And those rings you're wearing today—Masonic rings?"

"Of great antiquity." He wiggled his fingers proudly.

"You put on a grandstand show, Mordecai, but what will you do for an encore?"

"If it doesn't come off this time, I don't have to worry about encores, you know. The deadline nighs. But it *will* work, god damn it! I'm not even worried about that."

I shook my head, perplexed. I could not decide if Mordecai had taken himself in with his own splendid charlatantry or if these credoes were just a necessary adjunct to the larger deception, a sideshow, as it were. I even began to wonder if, given enough time, he couldn't convert me to his folly—if not by means of reasoned argument then simply by the sublime example of his deadpan and unremitting earnestness.

"Why does it seem so ridiculous to you?" Mordecai asked, deadpan, unremitting, earnest.

"It's the combination of fancy and fact, of madness and analysis. These books on your desk, for example—the Wittgenstein and the Vreden. You do really read them, don't you?" He nodded. "And I believe you do. That, and then beside it, the sheer chicanery of Byronic diabolism, the silliness of cooking pots and bottled foetuses."

"Well, I do what I can to bring alchemic procedures up to date, but my attitude to pure Science, capital S, was stated a century ago by a fellow alchemist, Arthur Rimbaud: *Science est trop lente*. It's too slow. How much more so for me than him! How much time is left me? A month; two. And if I had years instead of months, what difference would that make? Science acquiesces, fatally, to the second law of thermodynamics; magic is free to be a conscientious objector. The fact is that I'm not *interested* in a universe in which I have to die."

"Which is to say that you've chosen self-delusion."

"Indeed, no! I choose to escape. I choose freedom."

"You've come to a splendid place to find it."

Mordecai, growing ever more restless, rolled off the divan, where he had only just reclined, and began to pace the room, gesticulating. "Why, this is *exactly* where my freedom is largest. The best we can hope for, in a finite and imperfect world, is that our minds be free, and Camp Archimedes is uniquely equipped to allow me just that freedom and no other. Perhaps I might make an exception for the Institute for Advanced Studies at Princeton, as well, since as I understand it, it's organised along very much the same lines. Here, you see, I can hold everything in despite; anywhere else one begins tacitly to accept one's circumstances, one ceases to struggle, to engage each new wrong and ugliness in combat, one becomes hopelessly compromised."

"Nonsense and sophistry. You're just trying on theories for size."

"Ah, you see into my very soul, Sacchetti. But there is, after all, a point to my nonsense and sophistry. Make your Catholic Gaud the warden of this prison-universe, and you have exactly Aquinas' argument, nonsensical, sophistical: that it is only in submitting to His will that we can be free. Whereas in fact, as Lucifer well knew, as I know, as you've had intimations, one is only made free by thumbing one's nose at Him."

"And you know at what price that's done."

"The wages of sin is death, but death is likewise the wages of virtue. So you'll need a better bugaboo than that. Hell, perhaps? Why, *this* is hell, nor am I out of it! Dante has no frights for the inmates of Buchenwald. Why didn't your sainted Pope Pius protest about the Nazis' ovens? Not through prudence or cowardice, but from an instinct of corporation loyalty. Pius sensed that the death camps were the nearest approximation that mortal man has yet made to the Almighty's plan. God is Eichmann writ large."

"Really!" I said. Because there *are* some limits.

"Really," Mordecai insisted. He paced the room

faster. "Consider that fundamental organizational principle of the camps—that there be no relation between the prisoners' behaviour and their rewards or punishments. In Auschwitz when you do something wrong you're punished, but you're just as likely to be punished when you do as you're told, or even if you do nothing at all. It's quite evident that Gaud has organised His camps on the same model. To quote just one line from Ecclesiastes (a line my mother believed to have a special reference to her own life): 'There is a just man that perisheth in his righteousness, and there is a wicked man that prolongeth his life in his wickedness.' And wisdom is of no more use than justice, for the wise man dieth even as the fool.

"We turn our eyes away from the charred bones of children outside the incinerators, but what of a Gaud who damns infants—often the very same ones—to everlasting fires? And for, in each case, exactly the same fault—an accident of birth. Believe me, someday Himmeler will be canonized. After all, Pius is already. Are you leaving, Sacchetti?"

"I don't want to argue with you, and you leave me little choice. What you say is. . ."

"Unspeakable. For you, perhaps, but not for me. If you'll stay a little longer, though, I'll promise to be more tepid. And I'll reward you—I'll show you where Camp Archimedes is. Not in the Almighty's scheme, but on a map."

"How did you find out?"

"From the stars, like any navigator. You see, an observatory, even a remote-control observatory, has its more prosaic uses too. We're in Colorado, I'll show you."

He took down a folio volume from a shelf and spread it open on his desk. A topographical map of the state covered the two pages. "Here we are," he said, pointing. "Telluride. It was a big mining town at the turn of the century. My theory is that access to the Camp is to be had through one of the old mine shafts."

"But if your sightings are all accomplished via television, then you can't be perfectly sure, can you, that the telescope is directly overhead and not a hundred, or a thousand, miles away?"

"One is never perfectly sure of anything, but it would seem to be a lot of trouble to no purpose. And besides there was that piece of breccia I picked up off the floor of the catacomb the day before yesterday. It contained traces of sylvanite, one of the gold-bearing tellurides. So, we're in a gold mine *somewhere*."

I laughed, anticipating my own joke: "Performing the Magnum Opus here is certainly a case of carrying coals to Newcastle."

Mordecai, not laughing (it wasn't such an overwhelming joke, I see now), said: "Quiet! I hear something."

After a long silence, I whispered, "What?"

Mordecai, his face hidden in his too-large hands, made no reply. I was reminded of the first time I'd seen George Wagner, along the darkened stretch of corridor,

listening to phantasms. A shudder passed through Mordecai's body, then relaxed.

"An earth tremor?" he suggested, smiling. "No—no, just a little inflammation of the imaginative powers, I suppose, like Brother Hugo's. But now you must tell me, honest and true, what do you think of my laboratory? Is it adequate?"

"Oh, it's very fine."

"Could you ever wish for a finer cell to be prisoned in than this?" he asked urgently.

"If I were an alchemist, never."

"It wants nothing, nothing at all?"

"I've read," I said tentatively (for I did not see his purpose in this perfervid questioning), "that some alchemists, in the 16th and 17th centuries, had seven-piped organs in their laboratories. Music makes cows give more milk: might it be of any use in your work?"

"Music? I hate music," Mordecai said. "My father was a jazz musician, and my two older brothers. Of the smallest of small times, but it was their life. When they weren't practising, they'd play records or turn on the radio. I could never open my mouth or make the least sound, but they'd jump on me for it. Don't talk to me about music! Niggers have a natural sense of rhythm, they say, so when I was three years old I had to begin taking tap-dancing lessons. I was lousy at it, and I hated it, but I had this natural sense of rhythm, you see, so the lessons continued. The teacher showed us clippings from old Shirley Temple movies, and we had to learn her routines, right down to the last smile and wink. When I was six, Mammy brought me to the Thursday night talent show at the local theatre. She'd dressed me up in this piss-elegant little angel costume, all tinsel and chintz. My number was *I'm Building a Stairway to Paradise*. You know that one?"

I shook my head.

"It goes like this. . . ." He began singing the song in his rasping parrotly falsetto and at the same time to shuffle along the carpet.

"Son of a bitch!" he shouted, breaking off. "How the fuck can I do anything on a god damn rug?" He bent over, caught hold of the tasselled fringe of the figured carpet and pulled it clear of the tiled floor, dragging along or overturning furniture in the process.

Then he resumed, more loudly, his grotesque song and dance:

*"I'm building a stairway to Paradise,
With a new step every day. . . ."*

His arms began to flail out of sync with the ill-sung melody. His footwork became mere confused stomping. "*I'm going to get there at any price*," he shrieked. Flinging both legs out in front of him, he fell on his back. The song degenerated into pained screams, as his arms and legs continued to flail about. He beat his head violently against the tiles of the floor.

The fit had gone on only a short while before the guards arrived with a medical attendant. Mordecai was restrained and sedated.

"You'll have to leave him for a while now," the guards' officer said.

"There's something I was supposed to take with me. If you'll wait just a second. . . ."

I went to Mordecai's worktable and found the TOP SECRET folder I'd noticed when Mordecai had spread out the atlas. The officer looked at the folder doubtfully.

"Are you authorised to handle that?" he asked.

"It's a story he wrote," I explained, pulling the typed pages from the folder and showing him the title—*Portrait of Pompanianus*. "He asked me to read it."

He averted his eyes from the typed pages. "Okay, okay. But don't for Christ's sake *show* it to me!"

I left him then with the medic and the guards. Why is it that whenever I've been with Mordecai I feel, immediately afterward, as though I'd just failed an important examination?

Later:

A note from Mordecai. He has never, he claims, felt better.

June 17

THERE IS GREAT pleasure, and correspondingly great pain (the only metaphor that occurs is dismally anal) in getting out (the metaphor shyly peeps forth) a new oeuvre. Wonderful word, oeuvre.

Louie II's recent intrusion into these pages may prove of benefit in one respect: it has allowed me (compelled me, rather) to look at my past work more clearly, to realise how wholly meretricious it all was . . . and is. I include in this renunciation, I should add, that recent thundergush of rodomontade, *The Hierodule*.

Also, besides the actual Works-in-Progress, I have had glimmerings of something larger, my own Magnum Opus possibly, which was inspired partly by Mordecai's blasphemies of yesterday. . . .

Have read *Portrait of Pompanianus*, which is better than I'd expected, yet curiously disappointing. I think it is because it is so controlled a tale, the plot so meticulously elaborated, the language of such a concinnate beauty, that I'm disgruntled. I'd hoped for a *cri de coeur*, non-objectivist action-writing, a confidential glimpse of the Real Mordecai Washington. Whereas R. L. Stevenson might have written "Portrait" as a pendant to "A Lodging for the Night" (except that his is 40,000 words, nearly novel length).

The argument is worth recounting, especially as I've nothing else to fill my journal with today than snippets from the Warping Process (pun, compliments of James Joyce). This, therefore, by way of factoricity:

"Portrait" opens with a razzamatazz set-piece in the Rouge-Cloître Monastery, where the mad van der Goes is being treated by the brothers for his "inflammation of the wits". Their remedies are alternately tender and gruesome and uniformly inefficacious. Van der Goes

dies in a fit of terror at the inevitability of his damnation.

After the burial (there is a lovely funeral sermon first) a stranger comes in the night, digs up the coffin, opens it and breathes life back into the corpse. Hugo, we now learn, had sold his soul in exchange for (1) a complete tour of the Italian peninsula to see all the great paintings—the works of Masoccio, Uccello, della Francesca, *et al*—known in Flanders only by report or through engravings, and (2) three years of supreme mastery as a painter. It is his ambition not only to surpass the masters of the North and South but to rival the creations even of the Almighty.

The main body of the story concerns van der Goes' visits to Milan (there is a brief and credible scene with the young da Vinci), Siena and Florence. There are long discussions among Hugo, his diabolic companion and other artists of the time concerning the nature and purpose of art. Van der Goes' initial thesis is the one commonly held: that art should *mirror* reality. He cannot resolve how this may best be done—whether by the microscopic renderings and jewel-like tones of the Flemish school or by the Italianate mastery of space and plastic forms. Gradually, however, as he gains the promised mastery and achieves a synthesis of these two styles, his concern is no longer to mirror reality but (under the devil's instigation) to *compel* it. Art metamorphoses into magic.

Only in his supreme oeuvre (as his third year draws to a close), the portrait referred to in the title, does he achieve his super-natural purpose, and even then, as the devil bears him off to hell, the reader is led to doubt whether the catastrophe of the story was a consequence of Hugo's magic or merely of the devil's guile.

There is a rather tepid Faust-Marguerite romance threaded into the plot. I got a chuckle out of the heroine's description: she is modelled, outwardly at least, on Dr. Aimée Busk. No wonder it fails to convince as a romance!

In summary: I liked this book, and I think anybody who likes books about painters and devils would like it too.

Later:

Apart from an hour during dinner, which I ate with the prisoners in the communal dining room (they must get their chef from the Cunard Line!), I've been all day and half the night working . . . at the "larger something" of which I had glimmerings earlier today. It is a drama, my maiden effort in that form, and if sheer speed is any indication of merit, it must be wonderful: I've finished half the first act in a preliminary draft! I am almost afraid to reveal its title. Part of me still recoils from what I am about, like Bowdler confronted with a copy of *Naked Lunch*; another part gasps at the soaring, over-reaching audacity of it. Such tantilisations! Now, I see, I must put up or shut up:

AUSCHWITZ:

A Comedy

Mordecai's "inflammations of the wit" must be contagious. Angels and ministers of grace defend me! I feel possessed!

June 18

Elements of the Quotidian World:

The clocks. The clocks of the corridors, oversize, advertising their manufacturers, straining after neutrality, anxious not to be anxietal, like the clocks in public buildings. However, the minute hand moves not with the slow, imperceptible, downstream flow of other electric timepieces, but with abrupt, unnerving half-minute jumps, quanta of time. The hand is an arrow, but one that has been translated from linear to rotary motion: first the twang of release, followed at once by the dead-sure strike; then for a moment it quivers in its target. One becomes reluctant to inquire the time of such a device.

The absence of natural symbols. To enumerate absences: the sun, and attendant phenomena; colours, any but those that *we* have spread upon the walls, or that *we* are wearing, any that *we* have not had to imagine as a condition of their existence; cars or ships or carts or blimps or any *visible* means of transportation (we go everywhere we go in elevators); rain, wind, any of the arbitrary signs of *climate*; a landscape (how rich to the senses would seem even a Nebraska prairie—less, even endless desert), a seascape, a *sky*! trees, grass, soil, *life*—any life but our own dwindling existences. Even such natural symbols as can yet be found among us—such antique simplicities as doors or chairs or bowls of fruit or water jugs or cast-off shoes—seem to take on a wholly hypothetical character. Eventually, one supposes, the environment will simply fade away. (This is my observation only by way of confirmation; Barry Meade originated it.)

The dictates of fashion. As if to parody the specious sort of freedom we are allowed here, the prisoners give themselves over to an intemperate and absurd dandyism, avid not so much to dress well as to be on top of whatever *Scene* or *Time* says is on-top. Wigs, spurs, powders, scents, bathing outfits and ski clothes—anything. Then, as abruptly as these flowers bloomed, they fade; this morning's aesthete becomes the ascetic of the afternoon in a motley, home-made prison garb starker than any self-respecting penitentiary would issue its inmates. The dandyism is, I think, a wistful expression of solidarity with the outside world and with the past; the reaction from it, a declaration of despair that such a solidarity can be achieved.

The cuisine. Food here is unbelievably good. Today, for example, from an immense choice of breakfasts, I had fried bananas, Shirred eggs in a peppery tomato sauce, sausages, hot popovers and capuccino. At noon-day, lunching with Barry Meade and the Bishop in the latter's cell, I had: a half-dozen Bluepoint oysters, a watercress salad, ortilans on a bed of wild rice, cold asparagus, and for dessert, a *dame blanche* with soured

whipped cream and grenadine. If ever a meal cried out for champagne it was this but because neither of my lunch partners could or would drink, I settled on Oulmes, a Moroccan mineral water. (If I can't have champagne, I know at least that I'm causing someone a lot of trouble.) The evening meal is the chief social opportunity of the day for most of the prisoners, and no one hurries through it. From the many excellent possibilities, I selected: turtle soup; an hors d'œuvre of sweetbreads; Caesar salad; a rainbow trout, boiled over a wood fire; *Rehmedaillon* with a red currant sauce; roasted carrots, French beans with almonds, and a strange puffy kind of potato; and for dessert a double portion of *Wienerschmarm*. (I've been putting on weight as never before, since never before have I had a chance to eat like this day after day—or so little reason to concern myself with my quote figure unquote. I am considered a prodigy by the other prisoners, who have no better appetite than one would expect of condemned men, who are moreover deadly ill. They insist on these banquets in a spirit of perversity: "Let us eat cake!")

The cells. Caprice and costliness are the only common factor. The Bishop, in keeping with his sacerdotal character, is big on ecclesiastical furniture; Meade has a room full of Salvation Army end tables (he is making a movie of them); Murray Sandemann has pedigree Bauhaus antiques. And I have at last taken Mordecai's advice and had my decor altered to suit my taste. The room has been stripped bare, and I live with a cot, a table and a chair, trying to clothe the nude walls first with stuffs of the imagination, trying to decide. I find, to my chagrin, that I like it just the way it is.

Visiting hours. This journal to the contrary, no one spends much time with anyone else. In the dining hall and certain other areas, promiscuous conversation is tolerated, but it is bad form to address whomever on chance meetings in the library, corridors, etc. Most socialising is conducted on quite formal lines. Guard-delivered invitations with clearly delimited hours are the custom. Everyone is too poignantly aware how short his time is. Everyone can see Time's arrow quivering in the target.

More of this tomorrow perhaps.

Later:

First act of Auschwitz completed. Second act under way.

June 19

ELEMENTS OF the Quotidian World (continued):

Movies. Tuesday and Thursday nights. The selection is by majority vote on a list of nominations to which anyone (but not me!) may contribute. In practice, one new movie and one re-run are shown each week. This week's bill: the awesome fragment of Fellini's *Commedia*, which has at last fought its way out of the Supreme Court; Griffith's film of Ibsen's *Ghosts*. The same actor played both the philandering father and the

diseased son. At the end of the last reel a yellow filter is inserted in the projector (or, it may be, the film is tinted), and the hero undergoes an attack of locomotor ataxia, hammy but quite unnerving. With *Ghosts*, a number of Terrytoons from the '40's and a travelogue of mind-wrenching dullness (trout-fishing in the Scottish highlands). Why? Not through any sense of camp (no one was laughing). Perhaps this is another abortive effort toward solidarity with the larger world of dead-heads outside.

Other entertainments. Since George's death, there has been no resurgence of interest in the theatre (though when I've finished *Auschwitz* it may be produced) but occasionally one of the prisoners will give an open reading of his latest work—or a showing, or a whatyoumay-callit Happening. I've been to only one of these, which I found as dull or duller than *Holiday in Scotland*: an alchemical text in heroic couplets by one of the younger geniuses. Ho hum.

Team sports. Yes, that's what I said. Mordecai, some months ago, invented an elaborate variant of croquet (based partly on Lewis Carroll's game) that is played by teams of three to seven players. Every Friday night there is a tournament between the Columbians and the Unitarians. (The teams' names aren't quite as nicely-nicely as they may seem. They have to do with the rival schools of thought on the question of the nature and origin of syphilis, the Columbian school maintaining that the spirochaetae were imported to Europe from the New World by Columbus' sailors—which would account for the great epidemic of 1495—while the Unitarians believe that the many apparent varieties of venereal disease are in fact one, which they call treponematosiis, its Protean multiplicity being due to variations of social conditions, personal habits and climate.)

Anomie. Not surprising, since a lack of vital social or family ties was one of the conditions of the prisoners' selection. Now, it's true, there is a sort of esprit, a community—but it is a community of outcasts, and cold comfort. The exaltations of love, the quieter but more enduring pleasures of philoprogenitiveness, and the normal, normative happiness of building up, year by year, the form of one's own life, of making that form somehow meaningful, all these—the fundamental human experiences—are denied them, even in possibility. As Meade said regretfully yesterday: "Ah, all those girls I didn't leave behind! The pity of it!" Their genius, though in other respects it may be compensatory, only aggravates the distances that have opened up between them and the common ruck, for even if they were to be cured and allowed to leave Camp Archimedes, they would not find themselves at home in the world. Here in these deep burrows, they have learned to see the sun; there in the world of light, men still watch the shadows on the walls of the cave.

Later:

The second act is done.

Mordecai had another, worse fit today. It may be necessary to postpone the Magnum Opus. Or as Murray S. calls it, respectfully, the Big Deal.

June 20

Mordecai is well again, and the schedule holds. Have exhausted my capacity for chronicling small beer. Only the waiting now.

Later:

Half of the third act. The thing is fantastic.

June 21

It is fantastic, and it is done!

There's much to revise, of course, but it *is* done. Thanks be to . . .

Whom? Augustine says in his *Confessions* (I, 1): "It may come about that the supplicant invoked another in the place of the one he intended—and without knowing it." A danger equally in art as in magic. Well, if the devil must be thanked for *Auschwitz*, then let it be recorded that I thank him and give him his due.

As I write this, it is late afternoon. As I have some time before the dinner hour, I thought I would sketch in a few preliminaries to lighten what may prove a formidable burden of narrative, if the evening is half so eventful as it promises.

In the first giddy moments after I'd written the last speech for *Auschwitz*, when I could suddenly no longer tolerate these bare walls, richer in horrid suggestion than any Rorschach (for hadn't they been the screen upon which I had projected the successive images of my dismal comedy?), I stumbled out into the hypogean daedal of corridors, happening across the hidden heart of it, or its minotaur at least, Haast. Who, himself giddy with his improbable expectations, invited me to accompany him to the little fane, four levels down, that had lately been the scene of *Faustus* and which is to be the catacomb for tonight's solemn mysteries.

"Excited?" he asked, though really it was a declaration of fact.

"Aren't you?"

"In the Army a man has to learn to live with excitement. Besides, being as confident as I am of the outcome. . . ." He smiled weakly, expressing confidence, and waved me into the elevator.

"No, the real excitement won't start until certain officers in certain Pentagon offices hear about what I've accomplished. No need to name names. It's common knowledge that for twenty years a small but powerful clique in Washington has been burning up millions and billions of taxpayers' dollars to get us into Outer Space. While all of *Inner Space* had yet to be explored."

Then, when I wouldn't raise to the bait: "You must be wondering what I mean by that expression—*Inner Space*?"

"It's a very . . . thought-provoking. . . ."

"It's my own idea, and it relates to what I was ex-

plaining to you the other day, concerning the materialism of modern-day science. You see, science accepts only *material* facts, whereas in fact Nature always has *two* sides, a material and a spiritual. Just as every human being has two sides, a Body and a Soul. The body is the product of the dark, shadowy earth, and in alchemy this is what must be *albified*, that is to say, made as white as a naked, shining sword." As though questioning for the hilt of this sword, his hands waved about oratorically.

"Now the materialist scientist lacks this fundamental insight, and so *his* whole attention is directed to Outer Space, whereas an alchemist is always aware of the importance of *teamwork* between Body and Soul, and so he's naturally more interested in Inner Space. I could write a whole book about it . . . if only I had your gift for words."

"Oh, books!" I said, hastening to dampen these ardours. "There's a lot more important things than books. As the Bible says, *Of making many books, there is no end*. A life of action can contribute more good to society than—"

"I don't need *you* to tell me that, Sacchetti. I haven't wasted *my* life in some ivory tower. But still, the book I have in mind would be no ordinary piece of trash. It could answer many of the questions that are disturbing thoughtful people these days. If you'd care to look at some of the notes I've made. . . ?"

Seeing that he was not to be stopped, I relinquished to him with grudging grace. "That would be interesting."

"And maybe you could advise me on how I can improve them. I mean, to make them clearer to the average reader."

I nodded gloomily.

"And maybe—"

I was spared this last turn of the thumbscrew by our arrival at the entrance to the sanctum simultaneously with Dr. Aimée Busk.

"You're a bit early," Haast told her. His emissive good-fellowship retracted like a snail's cornua at the sight of Busk—in a suit as grey and chaste as any flatworm, epalpibrate, grimly mounted on her iron heels and ready to ride to battle.

"I've come to inspect the equipment that will be used at the séance. With your permission?"

"There are already two electronics experts going over every circuit. But if you think they need *your* advice . . ." He made a stiff bow, and she preceded him into the theatre, saluting trimly.

The flats for the first and last acts of *Faustus* had not been stripped, and the soaring bookshelves and shadowed staircase served now as a backdrop for the new drama. A lectern carved in the form either of an eagle or an angel supported a fat leather volume, a real book this, not mere painted canvas. It was spread open to a page of such cabalistic scribblings as I'd noticed on Mordecai's desk, but whether this was a further

theatricality or of some pragmatic and sacramental significance I could not tell.

This much accorded well with traditional presentations of *Faustus*; the elements added since seemed more suited to a modern horror movie, a ragtag, Japanese version of *Frankenstein* perhaps. There were bubblers in assorted colours, like giant Christmas tree ornaments, and what might have been a war surplus telescope, the larger end focused, introspectively, on the floorboards. There was a battery of dials and winkers and spinning reels of tape, homage to the cult of Cybernetick. But the happiest inspiration of the set designer had been a pair of modified hair-driers whence burgeoned, as from cornucopiae, a rich profusion of electrical spaghetti. Two N.S.A. engineers were inspecting the tangled innards of these perfect little orange, plastic and chrome death seats, while the Bishop watched over them to preserve the circuitry against sacrilege. They nodded to Busk, recognising her.

"Well?" she asked. "How are our black boxes? Will they turn everything they touch to gold?"

One of the engineers laughed uneasily. "As far as we can tell, Doctor, they don't do a damned thing except hum."

"It seems to me," Busk said, addressing me and pretending to have forgotten Haast, "that if one were setting out to perform magic tricks, one wouldn't need much more than a chalk circle and a dead chicken. Or, at the very most, an orgone box."

"There's no need to be become filthy," Haast said sullenly. "You'll see what they can do when the time comes. People made fun of Isaac Newton the same way, because he studied astrology. You know what he said to them? He said, 'Sir, I have studied it, you have not.'"

"Newton, like most geniuses of any size, was a nut. Madness is becoming to a genius, but I find it surprising that a man like yourself, a pedestrian, should need to go so far afield for the elements of his neurosis. Especially in view of the old saw, *Once bitten, twice shy*." She desired not argument but, like a picador, simply to wound.

"Are you talking about Auau? What everybody seems to forget about that campaign is that I won it. Despite the diseases, despite the treason of my staff, I won it. Despite the *lies* that surrounded me and despite, let me add, the most unfavourable horoscopes I've ever had to deal with, I won it!"

Wrinkling her nose with pleasure at the scent of blood, she stood back and determined where to place the next pic. "I've been unfair," she said, carefully. "Because I'm sure that Berrigan was much more responsible for all that happened there than you, as responsibility is judged these days. Please excuse me."

She must have thought, as I did, that this would have brought him to an entire standstill, ready for the banderilleros. But not at all. He walked to the lectern and then, as though reading from the hierograms in the

book, said, "Say what you will."

Busk lifted a miniscule eyebrow, inquiringly.

"Say what you will—there's something in it." He thwacked the lectern soundly with his fist. Then, with his inimitable sense of catechesis, he quoted the epigraph of Berrigan's books: "There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio, than are dream't of in your philosophy."

No wonder the man wins all his battles: he doesn't recognise defeat!

Busk reined in her lips and galloped off. When she was gone, Haast, smiling, turned to me. "Well, we sure showed old Siegfried, didn't we? Take my advice, Louie—never try and argue with a woman."

Traditionally these comic episodes are a prelude to more terrible events. Hamlet mocks Polonius, the Fool makes riddles, the drunken porter stumbles across the stage to answer the knocking at the gate.

Later:

I DID NOT EXPECT the catastrophe so soon. The play is all but over, and I'd thought we were somewhere in the middle of the second act. There is nothing left to be done now but to bear the bodies from the stage.

As always, I was in my seat well before curtain time, though not in advance of Haast, who as I came in was worrying the maintenance crew about the ventilators, which had developed a sudden autism. He had shaved the afternoon's white stubble from his face and changed into a black, double-breasted suit. Though of the latest cut, the suit seemed dated. Visiting Stuttgart in the early sixties I'd noticed how many of the businessmen were wearing the styles of their youth; for them—and for Haast—it would always be 1943.

The few prisoners not playing an active rôle in the rites arrived next, some in formal wear, others in more eclectic but no less sober attire. They took their seats not *en bloc*, but scattered throughout the small auditorium so that when they were settled the theatre seemed scarcely less empty than it had been.

Busk, too, had chosen to dress as though in mourning. She took the seat behind mine, and began immediately chain-smoking Camels. In a short while she had woven a little cocoon of smoke about the two of us, aided by the vents' malfunction.

Mordecai, the Bishop and a small host of censors, ostiaries, etc. (looking like the first act of *Tosca* at the Amato Opera) arrived last, or rather, they entered, with oleaginous pomp. The Bishop was goldenly decked out in Matissely symbolatrous vestments, though even he preserved one touch of the funereal. His mitre was dead black. Mordecai had exercised a certain macabre economy in choosing his costume for the ball: it was the same black velvet suit with a gold lace collar that George Wagner had worn as Faust. It stood all too evidently in need of dry cleaning, but even fresh it would have been wrong on Mordecai, whom it caused to seem almost uniformly black. Worse, its cut emphasised the

narrowness of his chest, his rounded back and bandy legs, his ungainliness in walking as much as his gracelessness in repose. He resembled, on an enlarged scale, one of Velasquez's pathetic dwarfs, the rich costume serving only to set off the grotesque frame. This was, doubtless, the effect intended. Pride will flaunt its ugliness quite as if it were beauty.

Haast hurried up to this monkey Hamlet and grasped him, albeit gingerly, by the hand. "This is a historic occasion, my boy." His voice was husky with deeply-felt self-importance.

Mordecai nodded, removing his hand. His eyes shone with a fierce attentiveness, uncustomary even for him. I was reminded of van der Goes's "painful eyes" in *Portrait of P.* "Thirsty for light, his gaze would keep returning to the sun."

The Bishop, duly ceremonious and followed by two supernumeraries who supported the glittering cope, preceded Haast up the four steps to the stage. Mordecai lingered in the aisle, scanning the faces in the audience. When his eyes met mine, there was a sudden flicker of amusement. He came along the front row to my seat, stopped and whispered:

"Now I want

Spirits to enforce, art to enchant;

And my ending is despair

Unless I be reliev'd by prayer."

He rose, crossing his arms over the stained velvet, smug. "Do you know who said that? I can see that you don't—but you *should*."

"Who?"

He went to the steps, mounted the first and turned. "It was the same who said, earlier:

I'll break my staff,

Bury it certain fathoms in the earth—"

I finished, interrupting him, Prospero's farewell to his magic arts:

"And deeper than did ever plummet sound

I'll drown my book."

"But not, you know," Mordecai added with a wink, "just yet."

Haast, who waiting at the lectern for Mordecai to come up on the stage, rattled a handful of crisp papers at us impatiently. "What are the two of you jabbering about? We shouldn't be talking now—we should be preparing our minds, emptying them out for a great spiritual experience. You don't seem to realise that we stand on a brink."

"But I do, I do!" Mordecai took the three steps in one unsteady stride, crossed the stage at a brisk hobble and took a seat beneath one of the Medusa-like driers. Immediately Sandemann began fixing wires to his forehead with adhesive.

"I'm dumb," he said. "Commence."

Haast laughed delightedly. "Well, I certainly didn't mean to imply that. But nevertheless . . ." He turned back to his meagre audience. "Before we begin, ladies and gentlemen, there are one or two things I'd like to

say. Concerning the great undertaking that is about to transpire." Then he began to read from the typescript in his hand.

Busk leaned forward to whisper stagily: "I'll bet the old gerontophobe goes on half an hour. He's afraid to bring it to a test. He's afraid of his silly brink."

He exceeded her estimate by fifteen minutes. Though I pride myself on the circumstantiality of this record I will not give more than the briefest synopsis here of that speech. Haast spoke first of the satisfaction it afforded him to be a benefactor of mankind and provided capsule accounts of the lives and contributions of earlier benefactors: Christ, Alexander the Great, Henry Ford and the great modern astrologer Carl Jung (pronounced with a soft J). He described affectingly the pathos and terror of aging and demonstrated how much harm is done to the social organism by the continual chopping off of its most experienced and useful members by short-sighted compulsory retirement programmes and death. He revealed the principle by which the Soul can remain forever youthful ("Keep an open mind, and be receptive to Fresh Approaches"), but he confessed that it had been the despair of his mature years that he could not find the complementary principle by which the Body might preserve like agelessness. Then, in just these last few months, he had, aided by his young colleagues (with the briefest of nods towards Mordecai) re-discovered a secret known centuries before to a privileged few but soon to be confided, if not universally, then to all members of society responsible enough to be able to benefit by it: the secret of Eternal Life.

By the time he was done I had become somewhat dizzied by the thick smoke about me and the growing heat. It must have been even hotter onstage, under the lights, for both Haast and the Bishop had become quite luminous with sweat.

While Haast, in turn, was being strapped and fitted beneath the drier, the Bishop advanced to the lectern and asked us to join him in a short prayer specially composed for the occasion.

Busk rose to her feet. "Pray until midnight, it's your production. But might I ask you, as we seem to have abundant time, the *purpose* of these various devices? Alchemists of the classic era must certainly have got by with simpler artifacts. When I asked the same question of two engineers this afternoon, they were unable to enlighten me, or themselves, and so I had hoped that you. . . ?"

"What you ask is not easy," the Bishop replied, with an affected and ludicrous gravity. "You seek to understand in moments what it has taken mankind untold centuries to comprehend. Is it the anachronism of electronics that puzzles you? But surely it would be short-sighted not to avail ourselves of *all* the resources of science! Because we respect the wisdom of the ancients does not mean that we must despise the technical virtuosity of our own age."

"Yes, yes, yes—but what does it *do*?"

"Essentially. . . ." He furrowed his brow. "Essentially, it magnifies. Though in another sense you might say that it accelerates. In its traditional form, the form known to Paracelsus, the elixir is slow-working. Once it has been absorbed into the bloodstream, it begins to penetrate the three meninges—the dura mater, the arachnoid and the pia mater. Only when these have been wholly transmogrified by the elixir—and this period increases in direct proportion to age or ill health—only then does the process of corporeal rejuvenation begin. But clearly, we could not afford a philosophic patience. We needed to hasten the action of the elixir, and that is the purpose of the equipment you see here."

"How does it achieve this purpose?"

"Ah, that question takes us into deeper waters. First, the alpha pick-up—that is, the device being readied now for Mr. Haast—records and analyses the electroencephalographic patterns. These records are then in turn processed by—"

"Enough idle talk!" Haast shouted, pushing aside Sandemann, who was fixing the wire coronet to his perspiring brow. "She's already heard more than she's cleared for. Jesus Christ Almighty, you people don't have any sense of Security! If she talks up again, I want the guards to remove her from the auditorium. Is that understood? Now, let's get back to business."

Once again Sandemann began taping the wires to Haast, working with the nervous, finicking methodical-



ness of a barber shaving a restless customer. Mordecai, his eyes hidden under the drier, was picking at his teeth with a fingernail. Boredom? bravado? tension? Without being able to glimpse his eyes I could not interpret.

The Bishop, adding some vibrato, now commenced his prayer, which (he pointed out) had been adapted from a prayer of the 14th century alchemist, Nicholas Flamel:

"Almighty God, father of light waves, from Whom flow, as blood from a beating heart, all further benisons, we beseech Thy infinite mercy: Grant that we may share in that eternal Wisdom that surrounds Thy throne, which created and perfected all things, which leads them to their fulfilment or annihilation. Thine is the Wisdom that governs the celestial and occult arts. Grant, Abbas, that that Wisdom may shine forth upon our works, that we may proceed unerring in that noble Art to which we dedicate our spirits, seeking that miraculous Stone —"

At this point one of the supernumeraries, kneeling at the side of the stage, rang a silvery bell.

"That Stone of the sages—"

Two bells, in chorus.

"That most precious Stone, which Thou in Thy Wisdom hast hidden from the tellurian world, but which Thou canst reveal to Thy elect."

Three—and as they jingled solemnly, the doors swung open and the philosophical egg, looking more than ever like a great cooking-pot, was wheeled into the room atop a small battery-powered trolley. Four supers lifted it to the stage.

Busk leaned forward to risk a small sneer. "Rituals! I'll take a good honest compulsion neurosis any day." But there was an over-insistence in the statement and in her manner that suggested that the Bishop's gallimaufrey was having its effect even on her—perhaps, indeed, especially on her.

DIZZY WITH THE burning Camels and attacked by belly-crabs as well, I found my attention straying from the prayer to the brute business of unsealing the egg, which was taking place almost directly above me. Only when this was accomplished did the Bishop's viscid incantations emerge from the humming darkness of the Latin-ate into the realm of ordinary humbug, just as sometimes, in a supermarket or elevator, one recognises the tune playing on the Muzak.

"... and just as Thy only begotten Son is at once God and man, just as He, born without sin and not subject to death's dominion, chose to die that we might be free of sin and live eternally in His presence; just as He rose gloriously on the third day: just so is the Carmot, philosophic gold, without sin, ever the same and radiant, able to survive all trials, yet ready to die for its ailing and imperfect brothers. The Carmot, gloriously born anew, delivers them, tinctures them for Life Eternal and bestows on them the consubstantial perfection of the state of pure gold. So do we now, in the name of that same Christ Jesus, ask of Thee this

food of angels, this miraculous cornerstone of Heaven, set in place for all Eternity, to govern and reign with Thee, for Thine is the Kingdom, and the Power, and the Glory, for ever and ever."

Even Busk joined in the response. "Amen."

The Bishop, handing his crozier to a super, approached the decanted egg and lifted out the earthen bottle that had been baking inside these forty days and nights. The lights were cut on cue, all but a single spot focused through the telescopic do-thingsy I'd seen that afternoon. (This light, I was later informed, was derived —by an unspecified process—from the star Sirius.) The Bishop poured the murky contents into a chalice, which, filled to the brim, he elevated into the beam of pure Sirian light. Now the assembled prisoners, on stage and off, perpetrated their most audacious plagiarism. They began to sing Aquinas' Eucharistic hymn, *O esca viatorum*.

O esca viatorum,

O panis angelorum,

O manna caelitum

At the climax of his purloined ceremony, the Bishop turned and offered the chalice to the lips first of Haast, then of Mordecai, both so swaddled in electrical gear that they could barely incline the chalice to drink from it. As each drank, the Bishop recited his own execrable translation from Aquinas' crisp Latin:

"O food of wayfarers! Bread of angels! Manna where-with all heaven's fed! Draw nigh and with thy sweetness sate the heart that ever hungers for thee."

The last spot faded to black, and we waited in that tepid, unmoving air for what we all feared, even the most sanguine and self-deluded.

It was Haast's voice, though strangely altered, that broke the stillness. "Give me some light! Lights! It works, I can feel it—I can feel the change!"

The full complement of spots came on, dazzling the retina's mild rods. Haast stood centre-stage, having torn the crown of wires from his scalp. Blood trickled from his temple and down his sweating, suntanned face, that gleamed in the spotlights like buttered toast. Trembling throughout his body, he threw open his arms and exulted in his reedy voice: "Look, you bastards! Look at me—I'm young again. My whole body is alive! Look!"

But our eyes were not on Haast. Mordecai, who had not stirred all this while, now with painful slowness lifted his right hand before his eyes. He made a sound that mourned all hope, that raised misery to the exquisiteness of mortal terror, and when his rigid frame would not support this outburst any longer, he cried aloud: "Black! The blackness! All, all black!"

It was over without transition. The body slumped in the chair, though the entangling wires prevented it from falling to the floor. A doctor from the infirmary had been waiting in attendance in the corridor. His diagnosis was almost as abrupt as Mordecai's death.

"But how?" Haast shouted at him. "How *could* he die?"

"An embolism, I should say. I'm not surprised. At this stage the smallest excitement might have been enough." The doctor turned back to Mordecai, now lying on the floor, as graceless in death as in life, and closed his wide-opened eyes.

Haast smiled strickenly. "No! You're lying again. He's not dead, he's *not*, he can't be. *He* drank the elixir too. He's been *restored* to life, reborn, albified! Life is eternal!"

Busk rose to her feet, laughing abusively. "Youth!" she jeered. "And eternal life, is it? Is this how it works, your elixir of youth?" And with the bull of magic dead before her, she strode out of the theatre, confident that she had merited ears and tail.

Haast pushed the doctor away from the corpse and laid his hand over its stilled heart. His groan was the brother of that which had shattered the body at his feet.

He stood up, eyes closed, and spoke, at first almost somnambulistically, then with mounting shrillness. "Take him. Take him from this room. Cremate him! Take him to the furnace now, and burn him. Burn him till there are only ashes! Oh, the black traitor! I'll *die* now, and it's him that will be to blame. I'm no younger—it was a trick. It was always a trick. Damn him! Damn the black bastard! Damn him, damn him, damn him forever!" And with each *Damn*, Haast kicked the corpse's head and chest.

"Please, sir! Think of your own health!"

Haast retreated at the doctor's restraining touch, as though in fear. Stumbling backward, his hand came down upon the lectern for support. Quietly but systematically, Haast tore pages from the book and threw them on the floor. "Lies," he said, crumbling the thick paper. "More lies. Treasons. Deception. Lies."

The prisoners seemed strangely to disregard Mordecai's body, which the guards, just arriving, had thrown on the trolley that had brought in the philosophical egg. It had proven to be no more, after all, than the most commonplace Dutch oven. I took a handkerchief from my pocket to wipe the blood from his face, but too soon the guards had my arms. As they led me out, Haast was still ripping apart the drowned, drowned book.

June 22

WAKING IN THE middle of the night, I recorded, in sleepy shorthand, the nightmare that had awakened me, then fell back into bed, longing for the numbness at the end of thought, and lay there, hollow and dry, staring into uncompassionate darkness. This, elaborated from those notes, is my dream.

THERE WAS FIRST a scent of cloying sweetness, as of rotting fruit. I realised it was coming from the large hole in the centre of the room. A very fat man was standing at the bottom of this hole amid heaps of breccia. Ton-

sured, a monk. His hood and habit were white: a Dominican.

He took the cord girdling his middle and tossed one end to me. Pulling him out was an almost impossible task. At last, though, we both sat at the edge of the hole, gasping.

"Usually, of course," he said, "I can float. Often to the height of a cubit."

For so gross a man he seemed oddly insubstantial. Gaseous almost. The pudgy hands resembled rubber gloves blown up to bursting. I thought to myself: *Louie, if you don't watch it, pretty soon this is what you'll look like.*

"And that's only a single miracle. I could mention many others. *Quantam sufficit*, as Augustine observes. Have you nowhere I can sit?"

"My chairs, I'm afraid, would be rather too . . . secondary. Perhaps the bed?"

"And something to eat. A little bread, some herrings." He jabbed a fist-balloon at the springs. "I've come to deliver a message. Consequently, I shall not stay long."

I pushed the button beside the door. "A message for me?"

"A message from God." He lowered himself onto the rumpled sheets. The hood shadowed all but the lower part of his face, where his mouth should have been.

"I doubt it," I said, as politely as I could.

"Doubt God? Doubt he exists? What nonsense! Of course you believe in God—everybody does. I myself have proven his existence three different ways. First, if He didn't exist, everything would be entirely different. Up would be down, and right would be left. But we see that this is not the case. Ergo, God must exist. Secondly, if God did not exist neither of us would be here now, waiting for something to eat. Thirdly, we have only to look at our watches to see that He exists. What time is it?"

"A bit past three."

"Oh dear, oh dear. They're *very* late. Are you good at riddles? Why did the hyperdulia pray to the Pia Mater?"

"Why is a raven like a writing desk?" I mumbled, beginning to be annoyed with my guest. I don't think he heard me, or if he did, he failed to grasp the allusion.

"You don't know! Here's another. A teacher of mine said, 'You call him a dumb ox. But I tell you that this dumb ox shall bellow so loud that his bellowing will fill the world'. Who am I?"

"Thomas Aquinas?"

"*Saint* Thomas Aquinas. You should have known that right off. Are you dumb?"

"Not compared to most."

"Compared to most—but what about compared to me? Ha! And God is smarter even than I. He is at the pinnacle of the chain of being. He is the first and *immaterial* being; and as intellectuality is a result of

immateriality, it follows as the night the day that He is the first intelligent being. Have you read Dionysius?"

"I'm afraid not."

"You should, you should. It was he who wrote that each order of heavenly being is taught divine science by the highest minds. As, for example, *I teach you*. Abbot Suger was especially keen on Dionysius. What did I just say?"

"What?"

"Say what I just said back to me. You can't. If you won't listen to simple things, how shall I be able to give you the message?"

There was a knock at the door. It was the coffee cart, but metamorphosed from tarnished chrome to blazing gold and studded thickly with precious stones. Three small angels, no bigger than kindergartners, brought it through the door, two pulling from the front, one pushing from behind. I wondered why they didn't fly, whether perhaps their little wings were aerodynamically unsound, as I remembered having read in a popular science magazine.

One cherub removed a tray of small, rotting fish from the bottom of the cart. He arranged these in a handsome Spode bowl and brought it to the saint, who had cupped his hands to receive it, a gesture of beatitude. As the cherub passed by me, a wingtip brushed my face. It was made not of feathers but of fine, white fur.

"A miracle! Every meal is a little miracle, you know. Herrings especially. I died from eating miraculous herrings." He took three of the fish in his bloated fingers and shoved them into the shadow of his hood. "A pedlar came by the monastery with a load of sardines. I'm not very fond of sardines, but herring—ah, herring is another matter! And what do you think happened? He looked into his last cask—" Another handful of the decayed fish went in, scarcely interrupting the anecdote. "—and it was full of herring! A miracle if there ever was one. Except that, as it turned out, they were spoiled, and I died three days later, after the most excruciating stomach cramps you can imagine. Isn't that fantastic? The story of my life would make a book. You wouldn't believe some of the things. Though there would be very little of. . . ." He cleared his throat and handed the empty bowl back to the angel. ". . . of a carnal nature. Because from the age of twenty I never experienced an impulse of the flesh. Not once. It made my studies immeasurably easier."

Another cherub approached with a golden tray of pastries, from which Aquinas selected a chocolate éclair. Only now did I notice the distressing inflammations that had swollen its tiny scrotum and caused the poor thing to walk with a strange, straddling gait. My guest caught my look.

"It's the orchitis, you know," he said, biting into the éclair, which squirted whipped cream from its other end. "Inflammation of the testicles. From the Greek, *ὄρχις* or testicle, whence also the word orchid, because

of the shape of its tubers. It all comes back to the same thing, sex, S—E—X. This is excellent pastry." The éclair consumed, he helped himself to a piece of cheese-cake from the tray.

"You've read, of course, about how my brother Raynaldo, by my mother's orders, had me abducted and brought to the tower of Roccasecca to be held prisoner there in order that I might not fulfil my vocation. Raynaldo was determined to take the Tempter's part and he sent a young lady to my cell, a blonde girl of remarkable charm, for I couldn't help remarking on it even as I chased her out with a flaming brand. I burnt the sign of the cross into the wood of the door to prevent her return, and it was then that the divine mercy issued the happy dispensation I have already spoken of. That is the tale that has always been told, but there is a sequel to it not so generally known. Raynaldo sought to undermine my constancy by more than that one device. At that time I was considered not unfavoured in my physical person. I was slim as once even you, Sacchetti, were slim, a very atomy, and I moved with a leopard's grace. But in that close prison I could not move at all. I read—the Bible and the Master of the Sentences—and wrote—one or two inconsequent opuscula—and prayed. But, also, and necessarily, I ate. Hunger is as powerful an impulse of the flesh as concupiscence, and even more basic to our animal nature. I ate four and sometimes five meals a day. Savoury meats and delicate sauces and the most exquisite little cakes, far surpassing *this*, were prepared in a kitchen that was engaged solely in making my meals. Once, twice, I refused my food, threw it from the window or trampled it on the floor, but then Raynaldo would starve me out. He would keep all food from me for three, four, five days, until it was Friday or a day of fast, and then there would be, ah, the most thrilling and abundant foods. I could not, I *could* not resist, then, or—later. After I escaped Roccasecca I found that on all the fast-days of the calendar I would be revisited by an insatiable, tormenting hunger. I could not pray, I could not read, I could not think, until that hunger had been assuaged. And thus, as through the years the immaterial intellect expanded like some god-like, moist squash, my material and fleshly aspect, my Body, by its crapulence, did swell and magnify to . . . this!" He threw his hood, revealing what must once have been his face. Gluttony had so overwhelmed it as to blot out all features but the heavy swag of jowls and chin that surrounded the stained orifice of the mouth. More than a face the pasty flesh resembled vast buttocks, in which the eyes were the merest dimples.

"And now I suppose you'd like some cake too. Oh, I saw the greedy look you gave that pastry tray. Mopsi, the time is at hand—bring Mr. Sacchetti his message."

As his two fellows caught hold of my arms and pulled me to my knees, the third rabbit-headed cherub

Continued on page 58

the green wall said

BY GENE WOLFE

THE ROOM WAS half a dome, the sides sloping gently around the floor until they were cut off sharply by a vertical, luminous wall of iridescent green. The wall said

THIS IS A MEETING

while the five people in the five free-form, off-white seats looked at it blankly.

A SYMPOSIUM

The man on the left (he wore a threadbare suit with wide lapels) stood half up, and then feeling the weakness of his legs and the whirling in his skull sank back into his chair. The chair was cool and smooth and soft, like the hide of a snake who has just changed his skin under a derelict refrigerator.

CALL THIS A COUNCIL

Next to him a man in dull armour took off his helmet and laid it carefully between his knees as though he were afraid it might break. It was of steel, drably painted and slightly dented. The wall said in large,

white, block capitals

YOU WILL NOT BE HARMED

and in the centre of the group a woman in flowing robes straightened in her seat and then bent, eyes closed, over her folded hands.

ARE YOU AFRAID

Beside her a man in filthy khaki shorts looked at his neighbour in un-ironed grey. He said, "My clinic . . . Jesus Christ. . . What's happened? Where's the bleeding clinic?"

NOTHING WILL HARM YOU

The man in grey: "I go in th' new wing, over the dinin' hall." He did not seem to realise yet that he was away from his accustomed surroundings. A tape sewn to his shapeless blouse read 223-850-14 *Wilson*.

LET US EXPLAIN

On the other side of the robed woman the man in armour swore vilely. "This is a flyin' saucer! That's what it is, a . . . flyin' saucer." He jumped to his feet,

reeled, but managed to stay upright. The red cross on his arm seemed brilliant against the textile-enclosed helicopter armour he wore.

WE ARE AN ANCIENT RACE

The man in the business suit said to the wall, "I've got six kids; won't you let me out of here? Who'll take care of them? Oh, God!" He fumbled a cheap cotton handkerchief out of his pocket and blew his nose.

OUR LAWS ARE JUST

The man in shorts said, half to the robed woman and half to himself, "I wonder if the abos will miss me . . . I'll miss them, all right. You're a sister, aren't you? I suppose I'm C. of E. . . ."

The woman answered stiffly, "I am Sister Mary Nathaniel of Sacred Heart Orphanage." The wooden beads dangling from her waist rattled faintly as she moved.

YOU MAY DEPEND UPON US

"It is! It's a flying saucer!" the helicopter rescue man shouted. He was still standing. "I'm telling you, I remember it all now. We was over Dak Pek. . . ." The steel-backed ceramic plates rustled heavily.

TO ALWAYS FUNCTION RATIONALLY

"I wonder what they want with us," the man in shorts said. "Biological specimens, I suppose. Flamin' well pickle us in formaldehyde or whatever they use. Perhaps stick us on cards with pins, eh?"

WE HAD BEGUN OUR

From the left, beyond the soldier's empty chair: "They must be a great deal more advanced than we are. You don't think they might want us for slaves, do you?"

EVOLUTION AS

The man in shorts said, "I doubt it. We probably can't even breathe the same mixture of gases they do. Come to think of it, we're a poor lot for specimens too. Not diverse."

INTELLIGENT BEINGS

The soldier asked, "Whadaya mean?"

DURING YOUR PLANET'S

"Well, we haven't any children among us, or any old people, and we just missed by one individual being all the same sex. Come to think of it. . . ."

CARBONIFEROUS AGE

"We all speak English," the nun said in her dry voice. "Are you yourself British, by the way?"

WE NEED

"No. Aussie."

INFORMATION A TECHNIQUE

"It could be a linguistic grouping then, or possibly racial, could it not?" The printing on the wall pulsed

brighter than before.

WE NEED YOUR SECRET

The man in grey said, as though he had made a profound deduction, "I bet it's for a zoo." He stood up and joined the soldier, and after a moment the man in the suit rose as well, the three of them forming a group in front of the nun and the man in shorts.

IF WE ARE TO

"Could it be technological? I'm a physician after all. You said you were attached to an orphanage?"

SURVIVE LONGER

"I teach first and second grades there, doctor. I've a Master's in Education, if that makes any difference. Couldn't it be religious groupings? Are any of us Jewish, for example?"

AS A RACE

The man in the suit said, "I am, and I'm an accountant."

BECAUSE WE CANNOT AS ALL OF

The soldier shrugged. "I'm a Baptist, I guess, but I don't think that's it. And I'm just an aid man and couldn't tell them anything the doc here couldn't." He looked at the man in grey. "What're you? A safe-cracker?"

YOU DO SACRIFICE

The prisoner did not seem to resent his remark. "I'm a Seventh Day Adventist," he said. "But only since I been in. I mean, not on the outside. What I was put away for, I used to stick up gas stations."

AS INDIVIDUALS ALL

"Maybe it's just anyone and there's no plan at all—just whoever was loose and handy." It was the man in the suit.

OUR LIVES FOR THE KIND

The half-hemisphere rocked five degrees, then straightened. They gripped the seats to steady themselves, too engrossed to give it further attention.

AND NOW OUR SPRINGS

"There must be a pattern," the doctor said. He pointed towards the accountant. "Where are you from?"

OF BEING FAIL

"Chicago." The nun said, "Pittsburgh"; the prisoner, "Omaha"; the soldier, "Chicago too, flyin' out of Da Nang."

HOW DO YOU DO IT

The lettering blinked on and off rapidly now, like an advertising sign:

HOW DO YOU DO IT—DO YOU DO IT

"I wonder if they got cancer research here too," the prisoner said.



LANGUAGE MECHANISMS

By Christopher Finch: a review of the work of
Eduardo Paolozzi

IT IS A commonplace that a painter or sculptor in the nineteen-sixties finds himself in competition with a whole range of technically sophisticated media and with a massive diffusion of information and imagery. One course open to him is to opt out of this competition and to produce something which exists wholly on its own fine-art terms; something which has an independent and stable existence. Alternatively he can expose himself to the media bombardment, explore the patterns of syntax which operate within it, investigate the possibilities of cultural control or communication systems, etc.

In 1952 Eduardo Paolozzi projected, at the I.C.A., a programme of imagery taken from the rapidly expanding worlds of Admass and the New Technology. Publicity material, popular illustrations and circuit diagrams—seen away from their usual context and on a greatly enlarged scale—suggested areas of visual delight unsuspected at that time by the majority of his audience. For almost a decade, however, this visual delight remained latent within his own work and only in the early 'sixties did he strike upon an idiom which allowed it to become articulate.

His first sculptures within this new idiom were Towers cast from engineering templates and machine parts (*Wittgenstein at Casino/The World divides itself into Facts*: 1963). Towards the end of '63 and through the next year he produced pieces welded together from standard machine castings (*Crash/Artificial Sun*) and then, in 1965, highly polished pieces welded from castings of his own design (*Akapotik Rose/Marok-Marok-Miosa*). Some of the Towers and also some of the more recent pieces have been painted; and since 1965 there has been a parallel series of sculptures made from



rolled and chromed steel (*Foto/Jazmin/Twisprac*).

These sculptures have become increasingly simple in appearance but all function in the same way. There is no question of Paolozzi's main aim being to create a single *gestalt* image (as is the case with much recent American sculpture). His pieces function, rather, as servomechanisms. According to McLuhan the artist is the only person in a position to grasp the Present as a whole. If the artist can use this privileged position to devise a basic system of syntax, he can provide us with mechanisms that will translate his personal grasp into a far more comprehensive grasp of the constantly evolving situation. Paolozzi—in his sculpture and in his other activities—has provided a series of prototypes for this new kind of cultural device.

LANGUAGE GAMES

All of Paolozzi's products are essentially language mechanisms. The recurring references to Ludwig Wittgenstein in his work are by no means gratuitous; Paolozzi is involved in a field of activity directly related to Wittgenstein's theory of language games. In common with other artists of his generation Paolozzi has devised (or recognised) new patterns of syntax that enable him to bring together elements drawn from the vocabularies of many different language systems which, at one time, seemed mutually exclusive. His sculptures concentrate these elements and patterns into a single icon. It is in his para-literary activities that we can more easily distinguish the mechanics of this process.

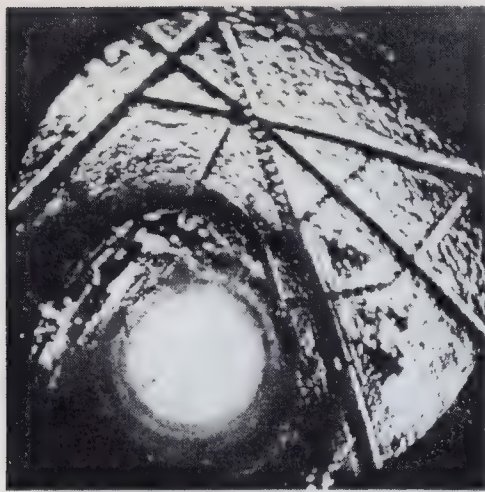


For several years Paolozzi has experimented with the programmed or random reorganisation of words and images, using a collage method reminiscent of William Burroughs and of dadaists such as Tristan Tzara. In 1962 he produced a book called *Metafisikal Translations* in which words and images were released from the normal restrictions of sequence and syntax (sequence and syntax still exist here but are constantly shifting; the reader is at liberty to scan the material in any way that he likes). A novel—*KEX*—has recently been published by the Copley Foundation. In this case Paolozzi simply selected the material and handed it to the editor (Richard Hamilton) to assemble as he thought best.

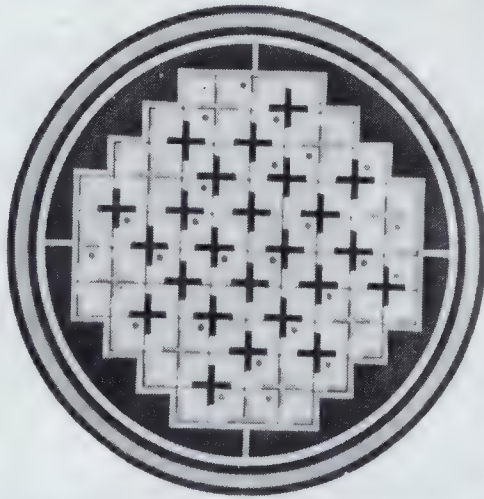
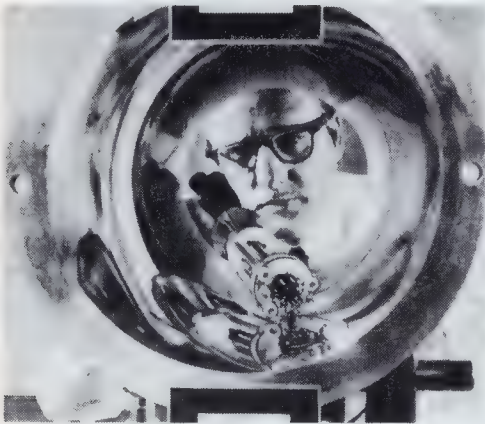
On a slightly different plane is the series of Wittgen-

stein prints—*As is When*—published in 1965. Paolozzi is moved as much by Wittgenstein's visits to the cinema as by his thoughts on reality but, in structure, the collage from which each print was screened is a faithful reflection of Wittgenstein's method. The series is in fact a sample of language games comparable with those that Wittgenstein himself put forward; Paolozzi totally accepts the philosopher's emphasis on linguistics as reality. ("A picture held us captive," wrote Wittgenstein. "And we could not get outside it for it lay in our language and language seemed to repeat it to us inexorably.")

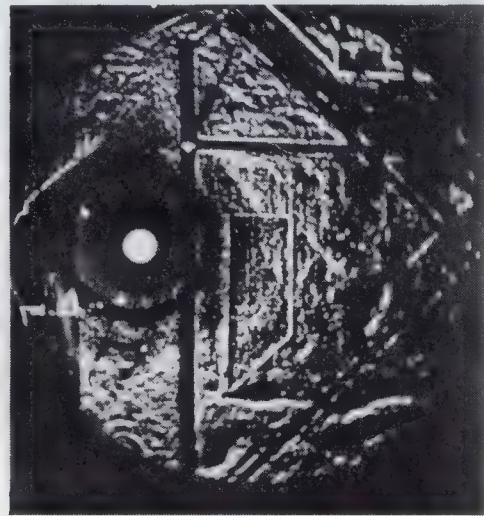
Continued on page 34



Checking Einstein with



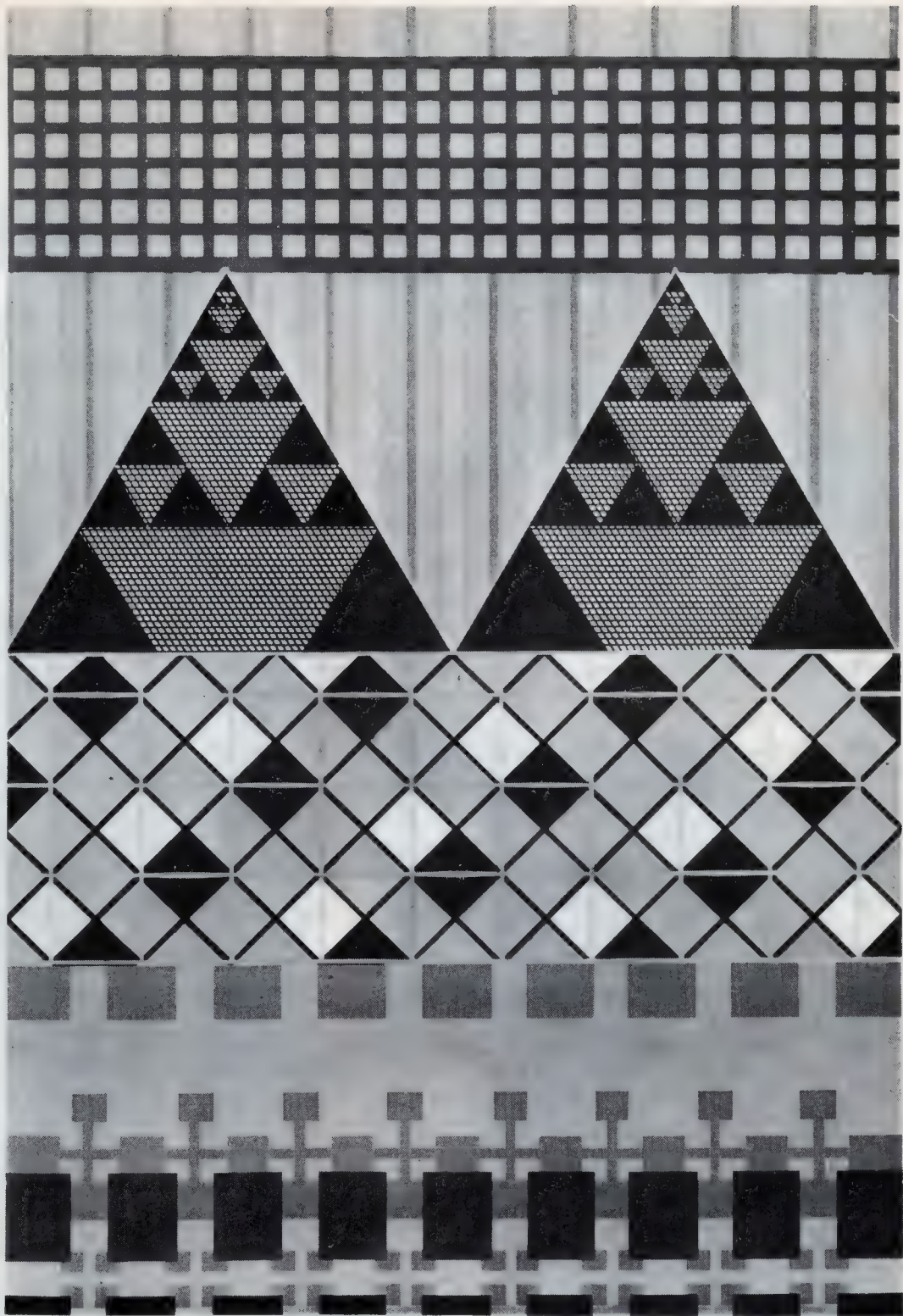
From "Moonstrips"



Aluminium Lotus (Museum of Modern Art)



ern Art)



From "Moonstrips"

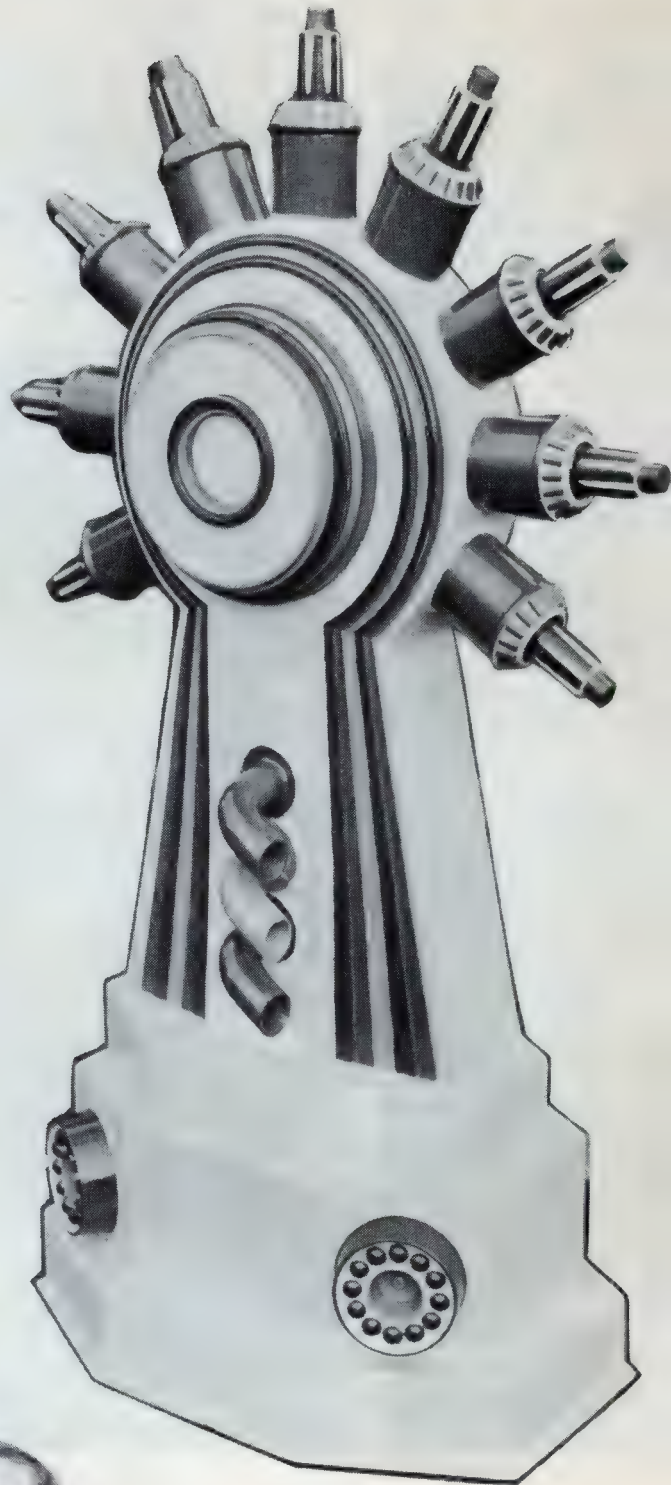
THE MEDIA LANDSCAPE

The most ambitious of Paolozzi's works in this idiom is *Moonstrips Empire News*, the first volume of which has been recently published by Editions Alecto. *Moonstrips* is a perspex box containing one hundred loose sheets each of which is screen-printed with text and/or images. The fact that the sheets are loose in the box means that its owner functions as an editor or performer, able to choose the sequence in which the material is scanned and thus form new syntactical links (though all possibilities are pre-determined by the elaborate pattern of choice and chance which constitutes the artist's programme).

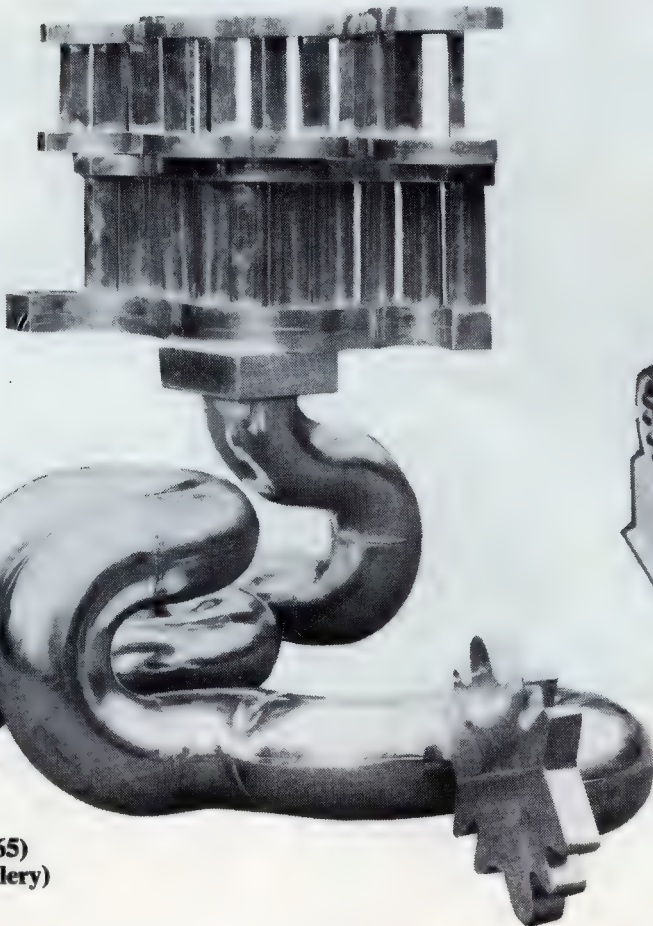
Texts and images are montaged from a variety of sources:

Film stills/molecular diagrams/language primers/architectural schema/Disney characters/weaving patterns / indexes / space hardware / pulp fiction / car stylings/etc.

Moonstrips is, then, an excursion into the media landscape.



Diana as an Engine
(Painted aluminium, 1963)



Rizla (1965)
(Tate Gallery)

PROGRAMMES

In this new situation the emphasis shifts to the artist as programmer. In the case of both Moonstrips and the recent sculpture most of the responsibility for the physical realisation of the work is delegated to craft specialists. The sculpture is created not in a studio but at an engineering works (art is produced here alongside crane bearings and aircraft components). Once the artist has devised his programme, specialists are contracted to carry it out. Castings are ordered from one firm of specialists, assembled by another skilled worker one hundred miles away and the completed structure is passed on to someone else to be polished or painted as the case may be. In other pieces sheets of metal are bent, under the artist's supervision, on an industrial roller, welded together on the spot, then sent some distance to the chromer.



Molik (Chrome plated steel)

Similarly, with Moonstrips, the basic programme is pasted-up by Paolozzi, then it is handed over to an expert to be screened with colour translations and other adjustments. Not all of these adjustments are necessarily specified by the artist but, where they are not the outcome of a first-hand decision, they are implicit within the overall concept. For all this to be carried out successfully the artist must, of course, have a thorough grasp of the techniques involved. There is no abdication of responsibility; simply a redeployment of skills.

ENERGY LEVELS

To Paolozzi the anonymous beauty of technology offers a model for art. There is no point, however, to competing with technology; accept its methods—and economics if necessary—but compete and everything is lost. In his sculptures Paolozzi simulates the elegance of technology but translates it into another context where it does not have to compete with its functional antecedents (to lay a work of art open to direct comparison with a gas-turbine engine would be absurd). Paolozzi takes the imagery and methods of technology but energises them within a totally different language structure.

Imagery of any kind can only function at certain levels of energy. Paolozzi is using material which has previously been energised in other contexts—which has functioned as part of an already existing kinetic system, whether narrative, analytical or structural. Once detached from this context it is reduced to its ground state—the lowest stable energy level. Paolozzi's commitment is to create a new environment or system which will return the imagery to a pitch of energy equivalent to that which it enjoyed in its original context. Since he is concerned with reflecting the world as it is, and not with solving some specific problem, it is inevitable that all narrative or logical bias should be dropped. Literary or scientific induction is abandoned in favour of a picture of the world structured according to a system which we can all recognise even though it remains unspecified.

Paolozzi's imagery is energised within the context of language as reality; and we are not talking, here, of some ideal language but of something nearer to Rimbaud's *Alchemy of the Word*—though *Alchemy of the Word* itself becomes inadequate. J. L. Borges refers, in *The Mirror of Enigmas*, to Machen's hypothesis, "that the outer world—forms, temperatures, the moon—is a language that we humans have forgotten or which we can scarcely distinguish. . . ." At all times it has been the business of the artist to present the elements of this language in such a way as to give us some hope of cracking the code. Within the framework of the 'sixties, it is with this that Paolozzi is concerned.

Kazoo

James Sallis

WALKING DOWN THE street on my way to see The Leech, I'm attacked by this guy who jumps out of an alley shouting *Hai! Hai! Feefifofum!* (you know: bloodcurdling) over and over, cutting air with the sides of his hands. He says *Hai!* again, then *Watch out, man! I'm gonna lay you open!* He's still assaulting the air, battering it too.

My, I think, *an alley cat*. Then I stand off and kind of watch this little dance he's doing. Dispassionately in front, you see, but I get to admiring it. I mean, he's cutting some great steps, beating hell out of the air. I snap my fingers for him, clap a little.

You watch out, man! he says. *You get cute, I'm gonna hurt you bad, put you through that wall there.* Then he goes back to his *Hai!* and *Feefifofum!* He's standing off about three yards from me, jumping around, chopping his hands back and forth, looking mean, a real hardankle. He's about five foot and looks like he might have modelled for Dylan Thomas' bit about the "bunched monkey coming".

By this time there's quite a crowd piling up. They're all standing around clapping, snapping their fingers, digging the action. Some guy in like black heads in to sell *Watchtowers*, and this Morton pops up and starts passing around stone tablets and pillows of salt. There's a spade out on the edge of the crowd, he's picking pockets, got three arms. Deep Fat Friar passes by, frowns, goes on down the street flogging himself with a vinyl fly swatter. And there's this cop on the fringe giving out with a mantra of dispersal. *Ibishuma, go go; ibishuma, go go* (don't think he had it quite right, you know?).

One guy pulls out a set of plastic spoons and commences to make them go clackety-clack, clackety-clack between his thumb and great toe. Another guy has a kazoo. Someone else is trying to get them to do *Melancholy Baby*. *Take your clothes off and be adancin' bare*, this smartass yells from the back of the crowd.

He is kinda hairy, this guy.

Come on, Ralph, he shouts at me. *Come on, man, we're gonna tangle. Hai! Feefifofum!* But you can tell he likes it, the attention I mean, because he goes up on his toes and pirouettes.

I stand there looking at him, frowning a little, dispassionate again. I mean, I'm getting kind of tired of the bit by now. Some guy comes by about then with a monkey on his back, grinding at a nutchopper. Another one's hunkered-down on the corner to demonstrate his Vegamatic; his buddy's scraping bananas. And there's this like arthritic wobbling down the sidewalk with a Dixie cup, begging green-stamps.

Hai! Hai! Hing! (That last one way up in the nose.)

He stops and drops his hands, looks down at the concrete, shuffles his feet. *Aw come on, Ralph. . .* Then he's *Hai!*-ing and *Feefifofum!*-ing again, going at it like mad, jumping around like a spastic toad.

And by this time I'm beginning to get *real* tired. I mean, I put up with his bag through here but now I'm gonna be late to see The Leech, so I—and let this be a lesson to all of you—I move in for the kill. I've been watching Captain Conqueroo on the morning tube, you see, and I'm like eager to try this thing out. So when this guy sees me coming and charges in like a rhinoceros or something, I just step ever so casually to one side and with a sudden blur of motion I get him with the Triple-Reverse Elbow Block, lay it right on him. He folds up like a letter that's getting put in an envelope that's too small for it and he falls down in like slow motion. His tongue's hanging out and a fly's walking up it toward his teeth.

Name's not Ralph, I tell him. Then I stand there humming along with the spoons and kazoo till he can breathe again. Which doesn't take him over twenty minutes or so—we'd only got through *Black Snake Rag*,

Continued on page 45



PETER TATE

MARS PASTORALE

OR, I'M FERTILE, SAID FELIX

TWO SEPALS DROPPED this morning. That is the sign. Lying here in the fitful sunlight of the gallery, scraping against my fellows, I know that soon there will be progress.

One senses it now, a tilting which causes us to bulk and tumble, the sudden admissions of mini-shafted brilliance that glint on my hard brown husk of a coat, a desire like an itch in embryo transmitted along funicular corridors to be out . . . right out . . . and away.

I check through my composition again, just for the hell of it, just to rout impatience. Here I go, from the skin in.

My outer integument is represented by the outer epidermis composed of tangentially-elongated cells containing colouring matter and the inner epidermis of cells columnar in shape, with layers of parenchyma cells between epidermal layers. How's that for an introduction?

My inner integument—or outer epidermis, if you'd a mind to—is palisade-like and sclerified. The other layers have been crushed in growth and are papery. Do you think you'll know me?

Further in, I have materials stored in the endosperm—starch, polysaccharides mannans and hemicellulose. They are slowly being digested by the developing embryo in a complex series of processes that bring about

transfer of food materials from old sporophyte—poor old sporophyte—to new. But all that comes later. Not yet. Not yet.

There is an axis (of course): two cotyledons above it which, I'm informed, are named collectively the hypocotyl. Then the axis and below that, an apical meristem. Sounds like fun.

That is where it's all happening. At the meristem. Occasionally primordia. Maybe I'll be lucky and turn out to be a budding something before we hit the outer atmosphere. Patience, friend. There's plenty of time, plenty to do.

Felix Jimpson is large and shaggy—somebody once said he had the appearance of a Welsh poet and he has tried desperately to remain unchanged ever since. But above all, he is a one-dimensional man. He *needs* someone inside him to draw breath.

JIMPSON: A fertile mind, that's what I've got. Ideas growing like wild flowers under the hedges of my brain.

His handsome blonde wife, Velvet, offers no reply. She has heard the words before, or if not the very syllables, some so similar that the difference is negligible. In any event, there is no need for any reply. Jimpson is licking his lips to savour the phrase.

JIMPSON: That was a good one. I must remember that one.

He pushes himself off the vibrastool and searches the skeletal shelf system until he turns up one of his official creation sheets, still unused. Then he casts around for the means to write.

JIMPSON (muttering): Wild flowers . . . hedges . . . brain.

Velvet has been working her way through the newsheet diagaword with never-dry poised and darting. Jimpson twitches it from her fingers even as she begins to write, still mumbling, still showing her his back when she looks up to comment. He scribbles his phrase, leaves the pen on a shelf and takes the phrase back to the stool to digest it in cold print. Feeling her gaze upon him finally, he looks up.

JIMPSON: What's the matter?

VELVET: My pen.

JIMPSON: Shelf.

He goes back to the phrase, with tongue busy and eyes slightly lidded as an affectionate parent might regard a child.

VELVET: My pen.

But Felix Jimpson has packed his mind and gone to another place.

JIMPSON: We must get out into the country more often. Wonderful inspiration for me. I swear I must be one of Mother Nature's favoured sons. I always feel that much more . . . powerful . . . among the greenery, as though the Muse were finding it easier to work.

He smirks self-consciously, happy in the literary jargon he is so fond of employing whenever the Mars Settlement Writers' Circle meets to marvel. Velvet abandons the puzzle, leaning back in her chair and closing her eyes.

VELVET: The greenery was a long time ago. Mother Nature doesn't know about this place.

But nobody answers her.

VELVET (thinking): This is how the conversation turns at some time or another every day. Felix Jimpson, founder-chairman of Mars Settlement (No. 3) Writers' Circle and Penmen's Guild; hero and champion to the not-so-young hopefuls who rode the perihelion to Mars as it swung within 137 million miles of Earth to find an inspiration that will start them churning out best-sellers; Felix Jimpson, whose kindly light leads local literati along paths of illusion where Nobel and Pulitzer and the Book-of-the-Month Club choice are milestones passed by walking and unsaleability and sheer lack of talent, roots one can avoid merely by a raising of the foot. But a kindly light that soon disappears back under its bushel when the circle has dispersed after its weekly mutual admiration session or when a member, inspired by who knows what source, makes a contribution too good not to have come from Felix Jimpson.

JIMPSON (breaking in on her thoughts): . . . as though

the wind just breathes her secrets in my ear for me to write them down.

Velvet giggles and falls silent, much to the annoyance of Felix, who feels distinctly ill at ease when she laughs and gives no explanation.

VELVET: But why must you always be so bloody pastoral?

Jimpson doesn't like the question. By its very form it shows his wife has been thinking before she asked it and she must be already suspicious of the answer. Probably, she expects a platitude. He fumbles mentally.

JIMPSON: In Nature, one can find all the images, all the similes, all the metaphors one needs to cover any human state.

VELVET: A platitude. Not all states are human. What then?

JIMPSON (petulantly): Let me finish.

He has to finish. He is committed to say what is in his mind because it is all that is in his mind.

JIMPSON: Look at the great poets of earth. Look how they took the country and its seasons as the inspirations for their most beautiful works.

VELVET: All right, we'll stay on that level. They were misty characters, all of them.

JIMPSON: What do you mean—misty?

VELVET: Poets in elegiac mood. Lacking in substance. Feather-light when they ought to be heavy with truth and purpose. Like the little parachutes on top of puff dandelions—see, I can do it, too. One good blow and they're gone. Now take a man like Charles Baudelaire. . . .

JIMPSON (interrupting volubly): Filthy. Obscene. And such terrible rubbish. Perverse love, unholy friendships, A rhyming rubbish dump.

VELVET: Anyway.

JIMPSON: Anyway what?

VELVET: Is your John Milton any more suitable for this place than my Charles Baudelaire? We need new. . . .

JIMPSON: But of course. This place is exactly like earth. The trees, flowers, insects are so . . . constant.

That's why I came. I wouldn't have come otherwise, no matter how bad the other place was. . . .

VELVET: And the people—what about the people?

JIMPSON: They're the same. They're . . . well, they came with us, didn't they?

VELVET: Not enough. Be profound about them. Don't liken them to pretty petals or statuesque landscapes. Besides. . . .

The curious suspicion comes back to her. She has not mentioned it to Felix because it seems so infantile when she is trying to impress him with maturity and make him acknowledge reality. But this vegetation—wasn't it just a little too ready to adapt to their ecological suggestions?

JIMPSON (echoing): Besides?

VELVET: I get a funny feeling about the plant life here.

JIMPSON: But it's perfect. Identical in every detail. It was a little isolated at first, admittedly, a bit wild

to ensure survival. But the soil section did a wonderful job gathering it about the centre just to make us feel more at home.

VELVET: I don't feel more at home.

Velvet parades her defencelessness in the hope of attracting some warmth from him to end their cold exchange. But he misses her intention.

JIMPSON: Give them a break. They'd have a job reproducing 19th-century Montmartre. To conclude on Baudelaire—who needs him?

VELVET: To reconvene on Baudelaire, a world too used to seeing filth for filth's sake and not probing for goodness in the midst of it. A world like the one we got out of but never really left.

JIMPSON: You're too pessimistic about the new affairs of new mankind. We didn't like earth, we got out of it. Everybody's too busy being an expert up here to have any vices.

Sometimes his glibness, his easy acceptance, his blind, blind eye leave Velvet in awe.

VELVET: And you're a poet with nothing to say. Even up here with everything new and crying out to be sonnetted and celebrated in iambic lines. At most, in honesty, you're an amateur juggler with words.

She does not try deliberately to hurt him. She loves him or she would not have come with him. And because she cares, it angers her to see him constantly, habitually headed in the wrong direction, wasting a talent that only needs a purpose.

VELVET (thinking): Felix Jimpson . . . (she needs him so much she yearns to silence him with a kiss) . . . the original big fish in a fresh small pool and loving it.

JIMPSON (desperately): Rubbish. You say I'm a fake because I like the sunshine and stay away from the dark. All right, tomorrow we'll go out into this little bit of collected countryside and we'll see how good a job Mother Nature and the soil section can do on your emotions.

VELVET: We shall see no more than we shall see. And I still say Mother Nature doesn't know this place.

It is done. We are toiling up the breeze now, away from the mother vessel. In free fall, I reflect.

Though we had expected the launch, it was still a shock when it came. A sudden tilt of the gallery floor, a precipitous rush and then nothing—nothing to hold on, no companions to antagonise.

Aloneness. And an all-pervading sense of colour—predominantly green and blue and with a dry rain falling out of the blue that excites the skin and flows inward through welcoming pores.

But what is this colour? What is this rain? I drift, seeking guidance from the hurried programming sessions in the chequered gallery. It will be like waking, we were warned, with a power and a sensitivity that we did not have before. But never having lived before, how do I know what is new and what is hereditary; what ordeals must I face in this new paint and paper world

where dreams take suck like bees and we suddenly have the power to rule?

I bear downward as the impetus fails beneath me but am buoyed up again almost immediately by some ground current. I drift and am no longer young. For the first time I experience—fear?

SO FELIX AND Velvet drive out along the ferroway, under the blue cupola sky, to meet the green lady. They eat a bulky old-fashioned lunch among the pines from treasured polythene wrappers.

FELIX: You wanted strength—what about these?

VELVET: They're strong, but they're not going anywhere particularly.

Felix sighs deeply.

They drink traditional tea from an imported thermos as they walk along a dirt-camouflaged strip through a cornfield. Quasi-life hums and pulses around them. A lark springs skyward.

FELIX (excited): There! Look at him go. Doesn't that speed, that song, suggest something?

VELVET: A bird. A song. No more. The poet who relied on that died—or should have done—when commuting was invented. These days, everybody has eyes to see everything. Poets should have had corneal grafting on their minds.

Felix swears so softly that Velvet does not hear. Did she hear, she might think it the most mature comment he has made all day.

FELIX (thinking): She's beating me down. Finally and irrevocably and mercilessly. Mother Nature, you're doing me no favours.

As it is, Velvet hears him cough sharply and wonders if, to give the afternoon some final irony, Felix Jimpson, Nature's number one son, is getting hay fever.

I am—somewhere. A million soiled curses on my own inadequate vocabulary. It was light and now it is dark. I was free and now I am enclosed. A great portal tumbled shut behind me with a roar like thunder. I detect moisture. Its flow, it seems, is to be my transport. Can I dominate from here? Now I must be brave. Now I must supervise my growth, stage by stage, with knowledge and purpose. I cascade to my destiny.

Between their car and the cornfield lay a meadow, a patchwork quilt of buttercups, corn marigolds and charlock. The micro-climatic hedgerows sheltered woundwort, hawkweed and cuckoo-pint and provided a foothold for the tufted vetch. It was a masterpiece of landscaping.

"And I suppose this," said Velvet, "is your mind. Well, it smells beautifully. But do you need a breeze to disperse your thoughts?"

Felix did not answer. He stood beside her, wheezing badly. He was looking at her, but not in any way that she recognised. It was as though he was giving himself over to her entirely, defeated by her sense and made needy by his own present physical discomfort.

Flaming countryside, she raged stupidly. False, cunning, beautiful countryside that may have given me my husband. I love-hate you.

Felix meanwhile heard a rustle like a new dimension sprouting. But it could have been their shoes through the grass as Velvet led him with some mysterious sadistic smile playing around her lips, back to their teleported station-wagon.

Felix rolled down the window as Velvet struggled to unbutton his collar.

"We'll drive," he said. "The rush of air will clear my head." I hope, he thought. Why am I so wet?

The car bucked once on the iron road as the front nearside wheel went over an unlawful obstruction. Felix and Velvet walked back to the spot together, shyly hand in hand.

The hedgehog was crushed flat against the tempered steel with a red smear where the weight of the car had burst its body.

Velvet wept a little and Felix felt slightly sick.

They walked back to the car for a hand-shovel.

"I'm sorry about that," said Felix, but it didn't sound like an apology. "That's not an apology. I feel sorrow for what I have done, because that hedgehog might have been a family man, or on the verge of it, or necessary for it."

He took five minutes to dispatch the remains and when he returned to the car, he was considerably shorter of breath. But he hadn't changed his subject. Even as he worked, he had been sorting through his thoughts. Now he believed he was on to something, and he wanted Velvet to hear.

"Why did we have to bring the defenceless?" he asked her. And before she had a chance to answer, he added, "And if we had to bring them, was it essential for them to stay defenceless? Couldn't somebody have told them the rules? Hell, we have their communication patterns in stock."

Felix wondered why he had so much to say when he could scarcely spare the breath for it. But still the words kept coming. "It makes my own life seem somewhat futile. A great big car with a great big fool of a driver. What could a hedgehog do? Nothing. If only he could have yelled or something. . . ."

He checked himself. It was beginning to sound as though whatever had loosened his tongue had done a similar job on his brain. "I mean. . . ."

Velvet silenced him with a finger on his lips. Even so, she noticed how he turned his head away quickly, either out of anger at being silenced or in some desperation to avoid any obstruction of his breathing process.

"And there you have it," she said, instead. "What else is a poet or any other writer except a hedgehog trying to find a voice to yell at oncoming death? With his yell he could have the power to make death stop, go back or swerve on to the other side of the road."

She was aware that the words sounded pretentious and stilted, but she had to make best use of the moment, of the images available. Felix, his breath

coming in tatters, heard the words from a great distance and had not the strength to be critical.

". . . my whole point, darling. Nature was fine for you, sure. But there's an awful lot of cannibalism below petal-level."

She kissed him lightly on the cheek and again he turned hastily away as though he feared suffocation.

"Tomorrow," she said, "you see the medic."

MY DOWNWARD journey has ended. If I move at all, it is only in a leisurely concentric course.

No light falls here, but as I investigate in my sensory, absorbent way, I find that it doesn't matter. Somehow, there is a trace element of nitrogen and—thankfully—more than enough magnesium. No light, so I will not be using much iron. Comforting to find that it is here, nevertheless, to act as a catalyst.

And sulphur. That means chlorophyll; and that means protoplasm. I can live here. I can live here. I drop my roots and throw out an arm.

Not a moment too soon. Already I am beginning to change symmetry. My beautiful spherical body, of which I have been so proud, is beginning to flatten at the head. Perhaps I should mourn the change, but it is all progress towards the final perfection, the fruition which is promised to us. Soon will come the cotyledons, then more cell division. Tissue systems are go. . . .

Felix examined the zig-zag trail of punctures down his arm. Even as he watched, two of them grew red, swelled, itched. He moved to scratch them instinctively. Vernon, the medic, stopped his hand.

He consulted a chart. "Pollen," he said. "Pollen and wheatgerm. You're allergic to them. You have no antibodies to fight them. You might have had them, but they're gone now."

"And that means?" Felix already suspected the answer. He put the question only because he wanted to hear the fact from somebody else.

"Stay away from flowers," said Vernon. "Stay away from trees, grass, wheat fields, countryside. Stay among steel and concrete and dust-free urbanity."

"But. . . ." There were no buts. What good was a but?

"Isn't there anything I could use? An inhaler? Couldn't I get into the country somehow?"

"Felix, I know the country's value for you. You're one of the few Aesthetes we have here. . . ."

Aesthete to asthmatic, thought Felix, in one simple unsuspecting damn lesson.

". . . Of course I could give you an inhaler—in fact, I will before you leave—but you have to remember that if you use it then go to the greenery then use it then go back to the greenery, pretty soon you'll develop an immunity. And there's nothing else I can give you. Ruled useless, sent back to earth to spend the rest of your life wheezing. You can't afford that. . . ."

"We had trouble enough getting here," agreed Felix. "Food scarce as it is, breathing space a very real factor."

I reckon we Aesthetes are here on borrowed time, anyhow. As soon as the testers chart our reaction to the new environment we'll be through here . . . back to earth, dumped on Deimos or somewhere." But my opinions have ceased to matter to me, he told himself. Why do I play on like a music box after a room has emptied?

"Exactly. All the more reason for playing it very safe, Felix. Think about Velvet. Think about you."

Vernon fetched a box from his dispensary and pressed it into Felix's hand as he stood up.

"I don't give you this with any thought of comfort," he said, "but a lot of your friends have been in. What did you get up to?"

He began to laugh, but had to give up because he started coughing.

"I think they must have left something behind," he said eventually.

Felix was tempted to play for sympathy when Velvet met him out of the X-ray, but he concluded that any underlining of his condition was superfluous.

Instead, he tried a dedicated nonchalance, countering her first questions with comforting, meaningless clichés—"Don't worry, I'll live" . . . "Just a little bit of dust got down there. It'll pass . . . it'll pass. . ."

But he was worried. His words conveyed less than the overlong pauses which separated them. Wisely, Velvet let him proceed towards revelation at his own speed. She knew he had something unpleasant to tell her and the longer he could stave it off, the better for himself. She would not have to wait long.

They let themselves into the chalet on the edge of the settlement and Velvet brewed tea while Felix read the instructions on the inhaler Vernon had given him and tried to make sense of the contents. He uncapped the mouthpiece, up-ended the cylinder and pumped a little down his throat, sucking in air deeply.

For a while the aerosol relieved him but too soon the congestion was back. He used the inhaler again and his breathing became less laboured—until the congestion came back and he had to reach for the inhaler a third time. This time he set it down, remembering Vernon's warning that he must not over use it.

"It's all finished," he said with a careful lack of emotion when Velvet sat down to pour the tea.

"As bad as that?" Velvet tried to sound as though she did not believe it.

"Medic warned me against the country."

Velvet's hand began to shake and she struggled silently to control it. "Against the country?" The nagging apprehension was back. "What's wrong with the country?"

"Nothing. It's me. Mother Nature's favoured son. I've developed an allergy to pollen and wheatgerm. But where the hell did I develop an allergy? The medic said if I ever had anti-bodies, they're all gone now. . . ."

"Hence the allergy, then."

"But you don't run out of them, Velvet. The body is making new ones all the time. At least, it should be. . . ."

It was at this point that a crazy notion took Felix, a terrible, terrible suspicion that laid him weak and wordless back in his chair, his hands scrabbling around for the inhaler.

He steadied himself. At all costs, he mustn't pass it on to Velvet. "So there goes the fertile mind," he said. "There goes Felix Jimpson, Mother Nature's green-eyed boy."

"It isn't that bad. I knew it wasn't." Now Velvet was in the game, bolstering his confidence while she began surreptitiously to eat her heart out.

"Good grief, what do you mean, 'It's not that bad'. Only bloody fatal." Felix embraced anger readily. He felt like screaming. At least anger gave him a chance to shout.

Velvet sat silent and let him go on until the congestion laid him low again. Then she said, deliberately callous, "What kind of a writer are you, anyway? All right, the country's out of bounds. What is left?" Felix had no ready answer.

"The sea," she said for him. "If it worked for Masefield and Tennyson, it'll work for you."

"Why?" The genesis of a memory caused Felix to pause, but there was no more. He would have to delve. "I was never inspired by the sea. What could the sea do for me?"

"You never gave it much of a chance. You were always too busy counting the minutes before you could decently say, 'Let's go the woodland way home'. We've never seen the sea up here. At least, let's give it a chance."

Felix was leaning back in his chair with his mind packed away. Just like the old days, thought Velvet. The old days like yesterday. She watched Felix's hand move unbidden towards his spray.

I MUST BE growing quite tall now, but the process has not been without complication. The acids—amino, nucleic, acetic, citric—have been present in heavy quantities and I have had to utilise the available alkali to balance them.

There has been a great deal of movement, too, though the fact that the host is not static does not seriously deter me.

I detect a new presence—calcium sulphate and a mess of other chemicals—amino-ethanol, hydroxide. This ethanol is a new one on me, but oxides and any nitrogen surplus ceased to present a hazard to my assimilation pattern many generations ago. I store the calcium and sulphate for subsequent use.

Meanwhile, there has been accelerated vacuolation of embryonic parts as expected and the less vacuolated tissues are forming the future primary vascular system. The meristems at either end of my axis are busy. Cell division continues apace.

The sea-line had been faithfully portrayed, even down

to the salt-white driftwood that lay in a ragged barricade along the high-water mark.

The sea moved restlessly, small waves creaming momentarily on the sand and receding as though sucked through distant teeth.

Felix tried to look out towards a horizon but there was the sight-screen at cupola extreme, misty and non-committal.

Seabirds cried plaintively but when he looked for them, he couldn't see them and he suspected that they and their songs were long separated.

He tasted salt on his lips. Again the chord of memory shivered momentarily but the single reverberation was gone before he could grasp and hold. But if there was authenticity nowhere else along this rolled-out seascape, how was there salt? Some trick of the place-makers?

But . . . but . . . but.

"It isn't the same." Felix sat down heavily on a rock with his shoulders hunched and his chest pumping. "It isn't the same."

Velvet perched beside him and took his hand.

"You can make it the same," she said, patiently. "The countryside is false, too. It's no different. You *wanted* the trees and flowers to be as you remember them, so you accepted them happily at face value. But it wasn't God or Mother Nature who put them there. You said yourself it was the soil section. And some queer culture before that."

Felix grunted. Any more expressive answer would have cost him valuable breath and he had to be content to listen.

"It was a matter of association. Recognition, inevitable comparison. But those are redundant motivations for real poets because they are second-hand.

"You have to look for something new here—something essentially Martian. You could even look within yourself. . . ."

Felix coughed to cover the shock. Surely she didn't know what he felt. How could she? Why should she?

"How do you react to the alien and strange?" she was asking. "What is it like having to call a lump of dusty rock home?"

Felix tapped her hand to attract her attention. His eyes were wide and his forehead running with sweat. He had been through his pockets hastily, and found nothing. She gave him the second spray she always carried in case he forgot his own.

He sucked at it hungrily and his breathing became fractionally less laboured.

"There's something I have to say," he started, haltingly. "It can't . . . wait . . . I . . . I . . . haven't got the breath to be . . . gentle or subtle . . . about it."

Beads of moisture navigated the topography of his face and lay trapped in the skin watersheds under his eyes. They could have been tears.

Velvet stroked his hand and waited.

"Us," he said. "Sleeping together. In same room. You. . . ."

He stopped and turned his head away. Now there was no doubt that he was weeping. He tried again.

"You take. . . ."

"Too much air." Velvet cut short his agony. "I'll move into the spare. I've been thinking about it, anyhow. Listening to the way you struggle, even when you manage to get to sleep."

He nodded gratefully. "It would . . . help."

She stood up quickly. "Do you feel like seeing any more?"

Felix shook his head. "Far enough," he said.

All the way back along the beach, he watched the water with an unconscious fascination.

At least it is wet, he thought. As if that fact alone should give him some kind of comfort.

He had bent for hours over the drinking fountain trying to wash out the thing that seemed to choke his body, trying to flush out the dust or whatever it was.

He had constricted the jet until the water spurted with such force that it went straight to the back of his throat, making him gag and splutter.

He had tried to fill himself up literally with water, but he was always forced to the toilet before the experiment could be completed and he had to start the whole thing again. And again and again.

But the water—any water—still held its attraction as subconscious counterpoint to the terrible dryness that crept up on him.

"I'll make you a list," said Velvet, breaking in on his thoughts.

"What?" He abhorred the condition that prevented him from saying in his once-flamboyant manner, "I'm sorry, my flower, I didn't hear," or, "Your pardon, my love."

"I'll work out a list of subjects for you. I'll do it tonight when I've moved out . . . moved *in* to the spare. It'll give me something to occupy me."

Not that I'm short of occupations, she thought. Just company. Oh God, how I yearn to hear the sound of Felix Jimpson in the trees. . . .

I SENSED SUNLIGHT. There is no doubt. My chloroplasts reacted positively. It is spasmodic, but it is sufficient to give me a definite purpose and outline for me a direction—a very necessary guide along these labyrinthine, yielding corridors where such a near-presence is easily missed among more chemical milestones.

The floral meristem is complete, and the latex within me throbs and courses with excitement.

The tales my children (beloved angiosperms) can tell at the next dispersal. My children. Such pride in their father-mother. Their potential thoughts rustle in my head as I nod in parental well-being. Their potential thoughts of expansion, of simulation, of eventual domination.

Felix Jimpson, chilled but unmoving at the window, could feel recollection—what damned recollection?—

going away from him in a tidal drag.

No moon any more but I still think of tides. No true seashores, yet my mind still goes paddling. Such useless words.

Get realistic, he ordered himself.

I will, I will, he pledged.

Velvet had gone away into her bedroom to work on the list. He wanted to call her in, to ask how it was going or at least to have her company. But she breathed and there was not enough of the precious commodity here for both of them.

Finally, sheer exhaustion drove him back to his bed, but he could not turn on one side or the other to sleep. He fought to organise his pillows so that they propped him in a sitting position and then slumped with the job half-done and a foul perspiration bathing his body.

Velvet, draped elegantly across her lonely double bed, wrote and then listened to the silence and wrote again.

"I am a pioneer," she wrote. "Elaborate!"

"A virgin land," she wrote. "In its pure natural state. A good old standby. On fishing in deserted canals."

She pushed herself up from the bed, moved to the window and gazed out at the angular sky. Phobos and Deimos, the twin satellites of Mars, were away at their orbital extremes. There was only the settlement lemon-light, faithfully reproducing the liquid splashes of the distant moon but lacking its mystery.

She had carried the list with her. "No moon," she wrote. "Full empty sky. Mourn lunar death."

Gazing up on the new immensity of it all, she could feel her own loneliness tapering to a fine point of pain. Just when they ought to be sharing a revelation. . . .

She read through the list, adding to it, making corrections. It remained inadequate. There was so much to be said, but they had to work it out together.

But perhaps this would help. She had read or heard somewhere that certain allergies had nervous bases. It was strange that Felix should now find himself physically at odds with himself; much more likely, frustration could be the cause, all tied up with the strain of the new life and the adjustment.

Perhaps, if Felix could be given a purpose. . . . And if not, the hell with hell. They would go back to earth.

Even though it meant that they would land in autumn and never live to see winter, they would be together for the fall. Of leaves, of themselves. Death with each other was eminently preferable to this terrible close apartheid.

COME OUT. I know you're in there.

Felix stood open-mouthed before the washstand mirror, pinning down his tongue with a finger while he peered into the reflected recesses of his throat for some sign of an obstruction.

He fancied something stirred beyond his tonsils, down towards the pharynx. He poked at it with his

fingers, but the action caused him to retch dryly and then the battle for breath began again.

I'll get you, you little leafy. . . .

He flung himself back to the window and sucked again at the night breeze, blowing off the distant shore, rising off the imported sea.

The imported sea. . . .

Felix tipped himself over the window-sill and landed eight feet below on his knees among the shrubbery.

He was thankful for his slippers as he moved out along the seaward track. The temperature, steadied at comfort level for the business of sleeping, did not bother him although his pyjama jacket hung unbuttoned.

At first he hurried but the effort left his heart pumping and he slowed his pace for fear of collapsing before he could reach the shore.

But long before he felt sand beneath his feet, sweat was clouding his eyes and soaking through his pyjama legs.

Up ahead, he could hear the vague mutter of the waves and he moved directly towards the sound. He picked up speed unconsciously and when he finally felt the water soaking through his slippers, he went down on his knees again, ploughing deep furrows in the wet sand.

He moistened his hands and cooled his running face with handfuls of sea. Then he began cupping the water in his palms and pouring it methodically down his throat.

His last recorded thought was of murder.

Now. It is now. I thrust myself over the last few fractions unfolding my scarlet banners. I have won. Daylight now and new life. Much new life. From the earth to me. From me to the world. I am the Creator out of the Created, the mother born of the child. I am triumphant.

A rain falls out of the sky to greet me and I turn up my face. A light rain that becomes heavy; a gentle rain that begins to irritate. An irritation that starts to BURN.

MOTHER MOTHER MOTHER MOTHER A SALINE RAIN THAT HURTS HURTS HURTS. . . .

MOTHER I

die. . . .

Velvet paused outside Felix's door with the list in her hand, listening for some sound of him. But there was no rattle of battle for air.

"Felix," she called. "How are you feeling?"

Silence.

She opened the door and saw at a glance that his bed was empty and the room deserted. Then she fled, calling, from the house.

The search party found Felix lying face down at the water's edge.

Velvet turned him over on his back, praying to find his face suddenly alive and his lips framing an "I-

fooled-you" smile.

But his features were ashen beneath the crusting of salt and his eyes stared from his head. She backed away, whimpering.

The men took over. They lifted the body onto the collapsible litter they had brought and bore it back over

their scattered, hurrying footprints.

Velvet fell in behind the cortège.

A dead poppy lay like a splash of hedgehog blood on the sand. Shortly, the breezes found the wilted flower and picked at it, sifting the tough little seeds and carrying them off along the shore.

Kazoo : continued from page 36

Mountain Morning Moan and part of America the Beautiful (raga form).

Anyhow, he starts coming back from violet toward the pinkish end of the spectrum, and he looks up at me and says, *Aw gee, Algernon. Look, give me a chance. Sorry I bugged you.* Saying that reminds him of something and he stops long enough to spit out the fly. *Wasn't my idea,* he goes on. *Nothing personal against you, guy told me to do it . . . Bartholomew?*

I shake my head. I kick him a little. *Who?*

Guy just came up to me at the bus stop, told me you were on your way to the bank, don't know who he was. Said if I beat you up I could have the money and if I didn't he'd send his parakeet out to get me . . . Chauncey?

I kick him again. *Big guy? Southerner? Hair looked like a helmet? Scar where his nose should be, cigar stuck in it?*

Yeah. . . . Look, you wouldn't be Rumpelstiltskin by any chance?

Sorry. I tell him that as I'm kicking him.

Didn't think so.

I reach down to help him up, since he's obviously going to need help. *That'd be Savannah Rolla, a friend of mine,* I tell him. Savvy's a film-maker and I know he and a poet-type by the name of Round John Virgin are hassling with a love epic called *Bloodpies*—in which the symbols of the mudcake, the blood bath, the cow patty and innocent youth find their existential union—so I look around for the cameras. But I can't spot them.

I'm on my way to the blood bank, I tell the guy. He's got a funny sense of humour, Savannah does. Do anything for a friend, though. And since his hand's in mine anyway since I'm helping him up, I shake it.

Ferdinand Turnip, I introduce myself. Ferdinand. My wife is a Bella, name's Donna.

Percival Potato, he says, and gives me this big grin like he's bursting open. *Mad to greet you.* He's giving me the eye, so I take it and put it in my wallet right next to the finger someone gave me the day before.

We talk a while, have lunch together in the laundromat, then it's time for me to split. We notice the band's still going at it and Percy cops a garbage can and heads

on over to blow some congradrum with them. I walk a mile, catch a camel and rush to the blood bank. I realise I've left all my beaver pelts at home, so I take off one of my socks (the red one) and give it to the driver. He blows his nose on it, thanks me and puts it in his lapel.

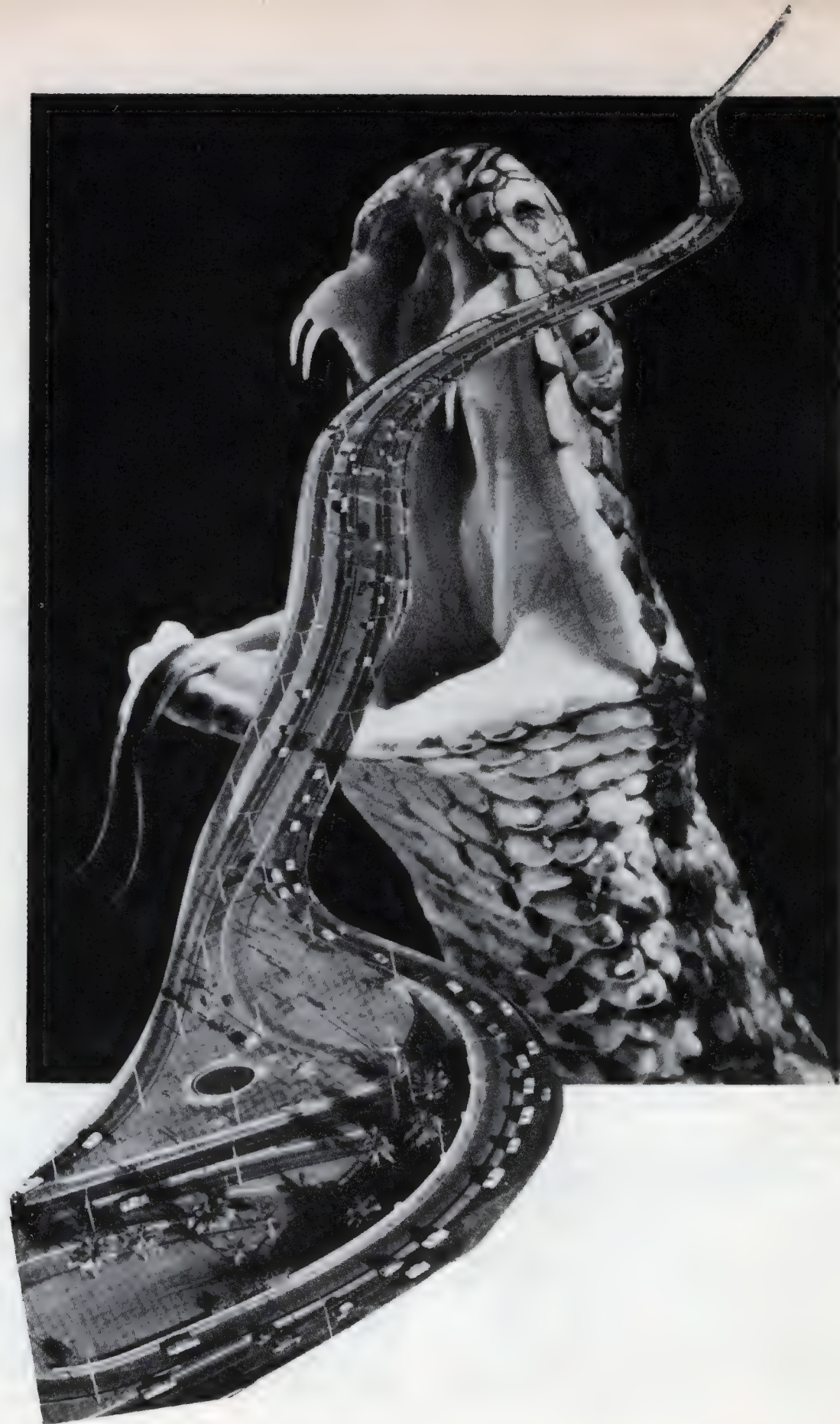
At the blood bank Dr. Acid, who's the head, tells me The Leech is dead from over-eating. Dr. Acid has three friends: Grass, who's rooting around in the drawers; Roach, who looks like a leftover; and Big H, who rides a horse—Joint has the bends and is taking the day off. They're all eating popcorn balls and scraping bits of The Leech off the wall, putting the pieces in a picnic basket that has a place for bottles of wine too. They ask me to stay for a potluck dinner, but I say no. I cop some old commercials with them for a while, then I dive out of the window and swim to my studio. Someone's dumped Jello in the water, and it's pretty tough going. The crocs are up tight today, but the piranha seem placid enough.

At the studio, reverently, I apply the 65th coat to my Soft Thing—four more to go. I got the idea from Roy Biv, a friend of mine. Each layer of paint is a step up the spectrum, a solid colour. I have carefully calculated the weight of my paint, canvas, medium. The last brush stroke of the 69th coat, and my painting will fall through the floor. It will be a masterpiece of aesthetic subtlety.

By the time I've drunk all the turpentine and finished burning the brushes, it's willy-nilly time to dine. But the lemmings are bad in the hall so I'm late catching my swan and I have to wait on top of the T.V. antenna for over an hour. Then by the time I get home, the vampires are out. They wave as I pass. Everyone knows you can't get blood from a Turnip—and anyway, they're all saps.

I go in and Donna comes up and kisses me and puts her arm around me and tells me she doesn't love me anymore. I look out the window. Sure enough, the world's stopped going 'round.

So I go in the john and find my kazoo and I play for a long time.



MULTI-VALUE MOTORWAY

BRIAN W. ALDISS

SHE TOO WAS obsessed with pelting images. Phil Brasher, her husband, was growing more and more violent with Charteris, as if he knew the power was passing from him to the foreigner. Charteris had the absolute certainty Phil lacked, the *gestalt*. He was himself; also, perhaps, a saint. Two weeks here, and he had spoken and the drugged crowds had listened to him in a way they never did to her husband. She could not understand his message, but then she had not been sprayed. She understood his power.

Nerves on edge. Burton, who ran a pop group, passed through her mind, saying, "We are going to have a crusade." She could not listen to the two men for, as they walked over the withdrawn meaning of the wet and broken pavement, the hurtling traffic almost tore at their elbows. That other vision, too, held her near screaming pitch; she kept hearing the wheels of a lorry squeal as it crashed into her husband's body, could see it so clear she knew by its name-boards it was travelling from Glasgow down to Naples. Over and over again it hit him and he fell backwards, disintegrating, quite washing away his discussion, savage discussion of multi-value logic, with Charteris. Also, she was troubled because she thought she saw a dog scuttle by wearing a red and black tie. Bombardment of images. They stood in a web of alternatives.

Phil Brasher said, "I ought to kill Charteris." Charteris was eating up his possible future at an enormous pace. Brasher saw himself spent, like that little rat Robbins, who had stood as saint and had not been elected. This new man, whom he had at first welcomed as a disciple, was as powerful as the rising sun, blank-

ing Brasher's mind. He no longer got the good images from the future. It was dead, there was a dead area, all he saw was that damned Christmas cactus which he loathed for its meaninglessness, like flowers on a grave. So he generated hate and said powerfully and confusedly to Charteris, "I ought to kill Charteris."

"Wait, first wait," said Colin Charteris, in his slightly accented and perfect English. "Think of Ouspensky's personality photographs. You have many alternatives. We are all rich in alternatives." He had been saying that all afternoon, during this confused walk, as he knew. The damp smudged crowded city, matured to the brown nearest black, gave off this rich aura of possibilities, which Brasher clearly was not getting. Charteris had glimpsed the world-plan, the tides of the future, carried them within him, was not so much superior to as remote from the dogged Brasher and Brasher's pale-thighed wife, Angeline. There were many alternatives; that was what he would say when next he addressed the crowds. A power was growing in him; he stood back modest and amazed to see it and recognise its sanctity. Brasher grabbed his wet coat and waved a fist in his face, an empty violent man saying, "I ought to kill you!" Traffic roared by them, vehicles driven by drivers seeing visions, on something called Inner Relief Road.

The irrelevant fist in his face; in his head, the next oration. You people—you midland people are special, chosen. I have come from the south of Italy to tell you so. The roads are built, we die on them and live on them, neural paths made actual. The Midlands of England is a special region; you must rise and lead

Europe. Less blankly put than that, but the ripeness of the moment would provide the right words, and there would be a song, Charteris we cry! He could hear it although it was not yet written. Not lead but deliver Europe. Europe is laid low by the psychedelic bombs; even neutral France cannot help, because France clings to old nationalist values. I was an empty man, a materialist, waiting for this time. You have the alternatives now.

You can think in new multi-value logics, because that is the pattern of your environment. The fist swung at him. Angeline's face was taking in the future, traffic-framed. It seemed to me I was travelling aimlessly until I got here.

"I was just passing through on my way to Scotland, belting up the motorway. But I stopped here because here is my destiny. Think in fuzzy sets. There is no either-or, black-white dichotomy any more. There is only a spectrum of partiallys. Live by this, as I do—you will win. We have to think new. It's easy in this partially country."

BUT BRASHER was hitting him. He looked at the fist, saw all its lines and tensions as Brasher had never seen it, a fist less human than many of the natural features of the man-formed landscape in this wonderful traffic-tormented area. A fist struck him on the jaw.

Even in this extreme situation, Charteris thought, multi-value logic is the Way. I am choosing something between being hit and not being hit; I am not being hit very much.

He heard Angeline screaming to her husband to stop. She seemed not to have been affected by the PCA Bomb, the Psycho-Chemical Aerosols that had sprayed most of Europe, including Britain, in the Acid Head War. But it was difficult to tell; the effects were so intricate. Charteris had a theory that women were less affected than men. He liked Angeline, but disliked her screaming. Bombardment of images, linked to her scream—theory of recurrence?—especially toads and the new animal in the dead trees at home.

There was a way to stop the screaming without committing oneself to asking her to cease. Charteris clutched at Brasher's ancient blue coat, just as the older man was about to land another blow. Behind Brasher, on the other side of Inner Relief, was an old building of the drab ginger stone of Leicestershire, to which a modern glass-and-steel porch had been tacked. A woman was watering a potted plant in it. All was distinct to Charteris as he pulled Brasher forward and then heaved him backward into Inner Relief.

The lorry coming from the north swerved out. The old Cortina blazing along towards it spun across the narrow verge, swept away the glass-and-steel porch, and was itself hit by a post office van which had driven out to avoid the lorry. The lorry, still bucking across the road, hit another oncoming car which could not stop in time. Another vehicle, its brakes squealing,

ran into the wall within feet of where Charteris and Angeline stood, and crumpled up. A series of photographs, potentialities multiplying or cancelling.

"So many alternatives," Charteris said wonderingly. He was interested to see that Brasher had disappeared, bits of him distributed somewhere among the wreckage. He remembered a multiple crash he had seen on the autostrada near Milano. This was much richer, and he saw a tremendous rightness in the shape of wreckage; it was like a marvellous—he said it to the girl, "It is like a marvellous complex work of sculpture, where to the rigorous man-formed shapes is added chance. The art of the fortuitous."

She was green and drab, swaying on her heels. He tried looking closely at the aesthetic effect of this colour-change, and recalled from somewhere in his being a sense of pity. She was hurt, shocked, although he saw a better future for her. He must perform a definite action of some sort: remove her from the scene.

She went unprotestingly with him.

"I THINK CHARTERIS is a saint. He has spoken with great success in Rugby and Leicester," Burton said.

"He has spoken with great success in Rugby and Leicester," Robbins said, thinking it over. Robbins was nineteen, his hair very long and dirty; he had been an art student; his psychedelic-disposed personality had disintegrated under the effect of being surrounded by acid heads, although he was not personally caught by the chemicals. Burton had been a third-yearer, had turned agent, ran the pop group, the Escalation, operated various happenings; he had run Robbins as a saint with some reward, until Robbins had deflated one morning into the rôle of disciple. They lived with a couple of moronic girls in old housing in the middle of Loughborough, overlooking the rear of F. W. Woolworth's. All round the town was new building, designed to cope with the fast-growing population; but the many conflicting eddies of society had sent people gravitating towards the old core. The straggle of universities and technical colleges stood in marshy fields. It was February.

"Well, he spoke with great success in Leicester," Burton said.

"Ay, he did that. Mind you, I was a success in Leicester," Robbins said.

"Don't run down Leicester," Greta said. "I came from there. At least, my uncle did. Did I ever tell you my Dad was a Risparian? An Early Risparian. My Mum would not join."

Burton dismissed all reminiscence with a sweep of his hand. He lit a reefer and said, "We are going to have a crusade."

He could see it. Charteris was good. He was foreign and people were ready for foreigners. Foreigners were exotic. And Charteris had this whole thing he believed in. People could take it in. Charteris was writing a book.

The followers were already there. Brasher's following. Charteris beat Brasher at any meeting. You'd have to watch Brasher. The man thought he was Jesus Christ. Even if he is Jesus Christ, my money's on Charteris. Colin Charteris. Funny name for a Yugoslav!

"Let's make a few notes about it," he said. "Robbins, and you Gloria."

"Greta."

"Greta, then. A sense of place is what people want—something tangible among all the metaphysics. Charteris actually likes this bloody dump. I suppose it's new to him. We'll take him round, tape-record him. Where's the tape-recorder?" He was troubled by images and a presentiment that they would soon be driving down the autobahns of Europe. He saw the sign to Frankfurt.

"I'll show him my paintings," Robbins said. "And he'll be interested about the birds."

"What about the birds?"

"A sense of place. What they do, you know, like the city." They liked the city, the birds. He had watched, down where the tractor was bogged down in the muddy plough, the landscape the brown nearest black under the thick light. It was the sparrows and starlings, mainly. There were more of them in the towns. They nested behind the neon signs, over the fish and chip shops, near the Chinese restaurants, for warmth, and produced more babies than the ones in the country, learning a new language. The seagulls covered the ploughed field. They were always inland. You could watch them, and the lines of the grid pencilled on the sky. They were evolving, giving up the sea. Or maybe the sea had shrivelled up and gone. God knows what the birds are up to, acid-headed like everything else.

"What are you talking about?" She loved him really, but you had to laugh.

"We aren't the only ones with a population explosion. The birds too. Remember that series of paintings I did of birds, Burton? Flowers and weeds, too. Like a tide. Pollination explosion."

"Just keep it practical, sonnie. Stick to buildings, eh?" Maybe he could unzip his skull, remove the top like a wig, and pull that distracting Frankfurt sign out of his brain.

"THE POLLINATION EXPLOSION," Charteris said. "That's a good title. I write a poem called The Pollination Explosion. The idea just came into my head. And the time will come when, like Judas, you try to betray me."

Angeline was walking resting on his arm, saying nothing. He had forgotten where he had left his red Banshee; it was a pleasure walking through the wet, looking for it. They strolled through the new arcade, where one or two shops functioned on dwindling supplies. A chemist's; Get Your Inner Relief Here; a handbill for the Escalation, Sensational and Smelly. Empty shells where the spec builder had not managed to sell shop frontage, all crude concrete, marked by

the fossil-prints of wooden battens. Messages in pencil or blue crayon. YOUNG IVE SNOGED HERE, BILL HOPKINS ONLY LOVES ME, CUNT SCRUBBER. What was a cunt scrubber? Something like a loofah, or a person? Good opening for bright lad!

The Banshee waited in the rain by a portly group of dustbins. It was not locked. They turned out an old man sheltering inside it.

"You killed my husband," Angeline said, as the engine started. The garage up the road gave you quintuple Green Shields on four gallons. Nothing ever changed except thought. Thought was new every generation, and she heard wild music playing.

"The future lies fainting in the arms of the present."

"Why don't you listen to what I'm saying, Colin? You're not bloody mad, are you? You killed my husband and I want to know what you're going to do about it!"

"Take you home." They were moving now. Although his face ached, he felt in a rare joking mood.

"I don't live out this direction."

"Take you to my home. My place. I've started making a new model for thought. You came once, didn't you? It's not town, not country. You can't say which it is; that's why I like it—it stands for all I stand for. Things like art and science have just spewed forth and swallowed up everything else. There's nothing now left that's non-art or non-science. My place is neither urban nor non-urban. Fuzzy set. Look outwards, Angeline! Wonderful!"

"You Serbian bastard! There may have been a war, the country may be ruined, but you can't get away with murder! You'll die, they'll shoot you." There was no conviction in her voice; his sainthood was drowning her old self.

"No, I shall live. I haven't fulfilled my purpose yet." They were easing on to the Inner Relief. Behind them, ambulances and a fire engine and police cars and breakdown vans were nuzzling the debris. "I've seen reality, Angeline. And I myself have materialised into the inorganic, and so am indestructible."

The words astonished him. Since he had come to England, the psychedelic effect had gained on him. He had ceased to think what he was saying; the result was he surprised himself, and this elation fed back into the system. Every thought multiplied into a thousand. He pursued them all on deep levels, struggling with them as they propagated in their deep burrows away from the surface. Another poem: On the Spontaneous Generation of Ideas During Conversation. Spontagions Ideal Convertagion. The Conflation of Spongation in Idations. Agenbite of Auschwitz.

"Inwit, the dimlight of my deep Loughburrows. That's how I materialised, love! Loughborough is me, my brain, here—we are in my brain, it's all me. I am projecting Loughborough. All its thoughts are mine." It was true. He knew what other people were thinking, or at least shared their bombardment of images.

"Don't be daft—it's raining again!" But she sounded frightened.

They swerved past concrete factories, long drab walls, filling stations.

Ratty little shops now giving up; no more News of the World. Grey stucco urinal. A railway bridge, iron painted yellow, advertising Ind Coope, sinister words to him. Then rows of terrace houses, time-devoured. A complete sentence yet to be written into his book; he saw his hand writing the truth is in static instants. Then the semis. More bridges, side roads, iron railings, the Inner Relief yielding to fast dual-carriage out on to the motorway, endless roads crossing over it on primitive pillars. Railways, some closed, canals, some sedge-filled, a poor sod pushing a sack of potatoes across a drowning allotment on the handlebars of his bike, footpaths, cyclepaths.

Geology. Strata of different man-times. Each decade of the past still preserved in some gaunt monument. Even the motorway itself yielded clues to the enormous epochs of ante-psychedelic time: bridges cruder, more massive in earliest epoch, becoming almost graceful later, less sick-yellow; later still, metal; different abutment planes, different patterns of drainage in the under-flyover bank, bifurcated like enormous Jurassic fern-trees. Here we distinguish by the characteristic of this mediumweight aggregate the Wimpey stratum; while, a little further along, in the shade of these cantilevers, we distinguish the beginning of the McAlpine seam. The spread of that service area, of course, belongs characteristically to the Taylor Woodrow Inter-Glacial. Further was an early electric generating station with a mock-turkish dome, desolate in a field. All art. Pylons, endlessly, too ornate for the cumbersome land.

The skies were lumped and flaky with cloud, Loughborough skies. Squirting rain and diffused lighting. No green yet in the hedges. The brown nearest black. Beautiful. . . .

"We will abolish that word beautiful. It implies ugliness in an Aristotelian way. There are only gradations in between. No ugliness."

"There's the word 'ugliness', so there must be something to attach it to, mustn't there?"

"Stop quoting Lewis Carroll at me!"

"I'm not!"

"You should have allowed me to give you the benefit of the doubt."

He flicked away back onto his own side of the motorway, narrowly missing an op-art Jag, its driver screaming over the wheel. I drive by fuzzy sets, he thought admiringly. The two cars had actually brushed; between hitting and not-hitting were many degrees. He had sampled most of them. It was impossible to be safe—watering your potted plant, which was really doing well. A Christmas cactus it could be, you were so proud of it. The Cortina, Consortina, buckling against—you'd not even seen it, blazing in a moment's sun, Christ, just sweeping the poor woman and her pathetic little porch right away in limbo!

"Never live on Inner Relief." Suddenly light-hearted and joking.

"Stop getting at me! You're really rather cruel, aren't you?"

"*Jebem te sunce!* Look, Natrina—I mean, Angelina, I love you."

"You don't know what it means!"

"So? I'm not omniscient yet. I don't have to know what it is to do it, do I? I'm just beginning. Burton's group, Escalation Limited, I'll write songs for them. How about Truth Lies in Static Instants? Or When We're Intimate in the Taylor Woodrow Inter-Glacial. No, no—Accidents and Aerodynamics Accrete into Art. No, no, sorry! Then how about . . . ha, I Do My Personal Thinking In Pounds Sterling? Or Ouspensky Ran Away With My Baby. Good job I gave up my NUNSACS job. Too busy. Look—*zbogom*, missed him! Maybe get him tomorrow! Must forget these trivialities, which others can perform. I'm just so creative at present, look, Angelina—"

"It's Angeline. Rhymes with 'mean'."

"My lean angel mean, Meangeline. I'm so creative. And I feel the gift in you too as you struggle out of old modes towards areas of denser feeling. Anyhow, see that church of green stone? We're there. Partially there."

And this partial country was neither inhabitable nor uninhabitable. It functioned chiefly as an area to move through; it was a dimensional passage, scored, chopped up by all the means the centuries had uncovered of annihilating the distance between Loughborough and the rest of Europe, rivers, roads, rails, canals, dykes, lanes, bridges, viaducts. The Banshee bumped over a hump-backed bridge, nosed along by the municipal dump, and rolled to a stop in front of a solitary skinned house. A squadron of diabolical lead birds sprang up to the roof, from instant immobility to instant immobility, on passage from wood to city. The slates were broken by wind and birds. Sheer blindness had built this worthy middle-class house here, very proper and some expense spared in the days before the currency had gone decimal. It stood in its English exterior plumbing as if in scaffolding. A land dispute perhaps. No one knew. The proud owner had gone, leaving the local council easy winners, to celebrate their triumph in a grand flurry of rubbish which now lapped into the front garden, eroded, rotting intricate under the creative powers of decay. Caught by the fervour of it, the Snowcem had fallen off the brick, leaving a leprous dwelling, blowing like dandruff round the porch. And she looked up from the lovely cactus—he had admired it so much, bless him, a good husband—just in time to see the lorry sliding across the road towards her. And then, from behind, the glittering missile of the northbound car. . . .

Charteris leant against the porch, covering his eyes to escape the repetitive image.

"It was a conflux of alternatives in which I was trapped. I so love the British—you don't understand!"

I wouldn't hurt anyone. . . . I'm going to rule by—"

"You can't bring him back by being sorry."

"Her, the woman with the cactus! Her! Her! Who was she?"

THE ESCALATION had taken over the old Army Recruiting Office in Ashby Road. Their surroundings had influenced two of their most successful songs, "Braid on the Inside of Your Britches" and "A Platoon of One". There were four of them, four shabby young men, sensational and smelly, called, for professional purposes, Phil, Bill, Ruby and Featherstone-Haugh; also Barnaby, who worked the background tapes to make supplementary noise or chorus. They were doing the new one. They could hear the ambulances still squealing in the distance, and improvised a number embodying the noise called "Lost My Ring In the Ring Road". Bill thought they should play it below, or preferably on top of, "Sanctions, Sanctions"; they decided to keep it for a flip side.

They began to rehearse the new one.

Bank all my money in slot machines

These new coins are strictly for spending

Old sun goes on its rounds

Now since we got the metric currency

I do my personal thinking in pounds

We haven't associated

Since twelve and a half cents of this new money

Took over from the half-crowns

Life's supposed to be negotiable, ain't it?

But I do my personal thinking in pounds

Greta and Flo came in, with Robbins and Burton following. Burton had lost his lovely new tie, first one he ever had. He was arguing that Charteris should speak publicly as soon as possible—with the group at Nottingham on the following night; Robbins was arguing that there had been a girl at the art college called Hyperthermia. Greta was saying she was going home.

"Great, boys, great, break it up! You've escalated, like I mean you are now a choir, not just a group, okay? At Nottingham tomorrow night, you're a choir, see? So we hitch our fortunes to Colin Charteris, tomorrow's saint, the author of Fuzzy Sets."

"Oh, he's on about sex again! I'm going home," said Greta, and went. Her mum lived only just down the road in a little house on the Inner Relief; Greta didn't live there any more, but they had not quarrelled, just drifted gently apart on the life-death stream. Greta liked squalor. What she could not take was the clutter of indoor plants with which her mother hedged her life.

Sister, they've decimalised us

All of the values are new

Bet you the twenty-cent piece in my hip

When I was a child on that old £.s.d.

There was a picture of a pretty sailing ship

Sailing on every ha'penny. . . .

They were used to Burton's madness. He had got

them the crowds. They needed the faces there, the noise, the interference, the phalanx of decibels the audience threw back at them in self-defence, needed it all, and the stink and empathy, really to give out. In the last verse, The goods you buy with this new coinage, they could have talk-chant as counterpoint instead of instrument between lines. Maybe even Saint Charteris would go for that. Saint Loughborough? Some people said he was a communist, but he was all the things they needed. He could even give them songs. They looked back too much. The future and its thoughts they needed. Lips close, New pose, Truth lies in static instants. Well, it had possibilities.

AS CHARTERIS laboured at his masterwork, cutting, superimposing, annotating, Angeline wandered about the house. A tramp lived upstairs in the back room. She avoided him. The front room upstairs was empty because it was so damp where the rain poured in. She stood on the bare boards staring out at the sullen dead sea with shores of city rubbish, poor quality rubbish, supporting flocks of gulls, their beaks as cynical as the smile of the serpent from which they had originated. The land so wet, so dark, the brown nearest black, late February and the trains all running late with the poor acid-head drivers forgetting their duties, chasing their private cobwebs. Nobody was human any more. She would be better advised to take LSD and join the majority, forget the old guilt theories. Charteris gave her hope because he thought the situation was good and could be improved within fuzzy limits.

Wait till you read "Man the Driver", he told Phil Brasher. You will see. No more conflict in society once man recognises that he always was a hunter. The modern hunter has become a driver. His main efforts do not go towards improving his lot, but towards complicating ways of travel. In his head is a multi-value motorway. Now, in the post-war period, he is free to drive down any lane he wants. No external frictions or restrictions any more. Thus spake Charteris. She had felt compelled to listen, thus possibly accomplishing Phil's death. There had been a rival group setting up in the cellars of Loughborough, the Mellow Bellows. They had taken one title out of thin air: There's a fairy with an Areopagitica, No external frictions or restrictions, We don't need law or war or comfort or that bourgeois stuff, No external frictions or restrictions. Of course, they did say he was a communist or something. What we needed was freedom to drive along our life lines where we would, give or take the odd Brasher. More irrational fragments of the future hit her: through him, of course; a weeping girl, a— a baked bean standing like a minute scruple in the way of self-fulfilment.

She wanted him to have her, if she could square her conscience about Phil. He was okay, but—yes, a change was so, so welcome. Sex, too, yes, if he didn't want too much of it. He was clean-looking; good opening

for bright young lad—where had she overheard that?! Well, it was self-defence.

The gulls rose up from the mounds of rotting refuse. There was a dog down there, running, free, so free, companion of man. Perhaps now man was going to be as free as his companion.

Tears trickling down her cheek. Even if it proved a better way of life, good things would be lost. Sorry, Phil, I loved you all I could for six years, but I'm going to bed with him if he wants me. It's you I'm going to betray, not him, if I can make it, because he really has something. I don't know if he is Loughborough, but he is a sort of saint. And you did hit him first. You always were free with your fists. She went downstairs. Either that running dog wore a tie or she was going acid head like the others.

"It's a bastard work, a mongrel," he said. He was eating something out of a can; that was his way, no meals, only snack, the fuzzy feeder. "I'm a mongrel, aren't I? Some Gurdjieff, more Ouspensky, less Marshall McLuhan, time-obsessed passages from The Great Chain of Being, no zen or all that—no Englishmen, but it's going to spread from England out, we'll all take it, unite all Europe at last. America's ready, too. The readiest place, always."

"If you're happy." She touched him. He had dropped a baked bean on to the masterwork. It almost covered a word that might be "self-fulfilment".

"See those things crawling in the bare trees out there? Elms, are they? Birds as big as turkeys crawling in the trees, and toads, and that new animal. I often see it. There is an intention moving in them, as there is in us. They seem to keep their distance."

"Darling, you're in ruins, your mind, you should rest!"

"Yes. Happiness is an out-moded concept. Say, think, "tension-release", maintain a sliding scale, and so you do away with sorrow. Get me, you just have a relief from tension, and that's all you need. Nothing so time-consuming as happiness. If you have sorrow, you are forced to seek its opposite, and vice versa, so you should try to abolish both. I must speak to people, address them. You have some gift I need. Come around with me, Angelina?"

She put her arms about him. There was some stale bread on the table, crumbs among the books he was breaking up and crayoning. Activity all the time. "Darling."

When the Escalation came along, the two of them were lying on the camp-bed, limbs entangled, not actually copulating.

Greta wept, supported by two of the group. Featherstone-Haugh touched a chord on his balalaika and sang, "Her mother was killed by a sunlit Ford Cortina."

"**M**AN THE DRIVER", Chapter Three. Literature of the Future Affecting Feeling of the Future. Ouspensky's concept of mental photographs postulates many photographs of the personality taken at charac-

teristic moments; viewed together, these photographs will form a record by which man sees himself to be different from his common conception of himself—and truer. So, they will suggest the route of life without themselves having motion. The truth is in static instants; it is arrived at through motion. There are many alternatives. Fiction to be mental photographs, motion to be supplied purely by reader. Action a blemish as already in existence. Truth thus like a pile of photos, self-cancelling for self-fulfilment, multi-valued. Impurity of decision one of the drives towards such truth-piles; the Ouspenskian event of a multiple crash on a modern motorway is an extreme example of such impurities.

Wish for truth involved here. Man and landscape interfuse, science presides.

CHARTERIS STOOD at the window listening to the noise of the group, looking out at the highly carved landscape. Hedges and trees had no hint of green, were cut from iron, their edges jagged, ungleaming with the brown nearest black, although the winds drove rain shining across the panorama. Vehicles scouring down the roads trailed spume. The earlier nonsense about the terrors of the population explosion; one learned to live with it. But mistakes were still being made. The unemployed were occupied, black Midland figures like animated sacks, planting young trees in groupings along the grand synclines and barrows of the embankments and cuttings and underpasses, thereby destroying the geometry, mistakenly interfusing an abstract of nature back into the grand equation. But the monstrous sky, squelching light out of its darkest corners, counteracted this regressive step towards out-dated reality moulds. The PCA bombs had squirted from the skies; it was their region.

There was a picture of a pretty sailing ship
Sailing every ha'penny

The goods you buy with this new coinage
Weren't made any place I heard of
They give out the meagerest sounds
But I don't hear a thing any longer
Since I did my personal thinking in pounds

I had a good family life and a loving girl
But I had to trade them in for pounds

The damned birds were coming back, too, booking their saplings, ready to squirt eggs into the first nests at the first opportunity. They moved in squadrons, heavy as lead, settled over the mounds of rubbish, picking out the gaudy Omo packets. They had something planned, they were motion without truth, to be hated. He had heard them calling to each other in nervous excitement, "Omo, Omo." Down by the shores of the dead sea, they were learning to read, a hostile art. And the new animal was among them by the dead elms.

Angeline was comforting Greta, Burton was turning

the pages of "Man the Driver", thinking of a black and red tie he had worn, his only tie. Words conveyed truth, he had to admit, but that damned tie had really sent him. He thought he had tied it round the neck of a black dog proceeding down Ashby Road. Spread the message.

"Greet, you didn't hear of a dog involved in this pile-up?"

"Leave her alone," Angeline said. "Let her cry it out."

"He did it, you know," Greta wept. "You can't have secrets in this city any more. Well, it's more of an urban aggregation than a city, really, I suppose. He pushed the whole chain of events into being, piled up all them lorries, killed my mum and everything."

"I know," Angeline said. The heart always so laden.

GREAT CROWDS in Nottingham to greet the Escalation, teenagers blurry in the streets, hardly whispering, the middle-aged, the old, the crippled and the halt, all those who had not died from falling into fires or ditches or roads, all those who had not wandered away after the aerosols drifted down, all those who had not opened their spongy skulls with can-openers to let out the ghosts and the rats. All were hot for the Escalation.

At half-term, the boys, sensational and smelly, had the crowds throwing noise back at them. Burton stood up, announced Saint Charteris, asked if anyone had seen a stray dog wearing a red and black tie. The Escalation howled their new anthem.

Adolescent Loughborough

With slumthing to live through

Charteris we cry

Is something to live by

He had scarcely thought out what he was going to say. It seemed so apparent that he felt it did not need uttering. The slav dreamers, Ouspensky and the rest, sent him travelling with his message through to this outpost of Europe. Obviously, if the message had validity, it was shaped by the journey and the arrival. In Metz, in France, he had realised the world was a web of forces. Their minds, their special Midland minds had to become repositories of thinking also web-like, clear but indefinite. If they wanted exterior models, the space-time pattern of communication-ways with which their landscape was riddled functioned as a valuable master plan. All the incoherent aspirations that filled their lives would then fall into place. The empty old nineteenth-century houses built by new

classes which now stood rotting in ginger stone on hillsides, while carriageways either approached or receded like levels of old lakes, were not wasted; they functioned as landmarks. Nothing should be discarded; but the New Thought would re-orient everything, as the ginger stone mansions or the green stone churches were re-oriented by the changing dynamic of the landscape. He was the Aristotle of the New Thought. The Fourth World System, Man the Driver, would appear soon.

Greta stood up and screamed, "He killed my mother! He caused the multiple accident on the Inner Relief. Kill him!"

White-faced Angeline said from the platform for all to hear, "And he killed my husband, Phil Brasher." But it was sin whether she spoke or not; she worked by old moralities, where someone was always betrayed.

Their faces all turned to his face, seeking meaning.

"It's true! The lorry was sweeping along the great artery from Glasgow down to Naples. In Naples, they will also mourn. We are all one people now, and although this massive region of yours is as special as the Adriatic Coast or the Dutch Lowlands, or the Steppes of central Asia, the similarity is also in the differences. You know of my life, that I was a communist, coming from Montenegro in Yugoslavia, that I lived long in the south of Italy, that I dreamed all my life of England. Now I arrive here and fatal events begin, spreading back along my trail. See how in this context even death is multi-valued, the black nearest brown. Brasher falling back into the traffic was a complex event from which the effects still radiate. We shall all follow that impulse. The Escalation and I are now setting out on a motor-crusade down through our Europe, the autobahns. All of you come too, a moving event to seize the static instant of truth! Come too! There are many alternatives!"

They were crying and cheering. It would take on truth, be a new legend, a new communication in the ceaseless dialogue. Even Angeline thought, Perhaps he will really give us something to live by. It surely can't really matter, can it, whether there was a dog with a tie or not; the essential thing was that I saw it and stand by that. So it doesn't matter whether he is right or not; just stay in the Banshee with him.

He was talking again, the audience were cheering, the group were improvising a driving song about a Midland-minded girl at the wheel of a sunlit automobile. An ambiguity about whether they meant the steering or the driving wheel.

New Directions in Medicine

Brig.-Gen. Thomas H. Crouch, U.S. Air Force, identifies

highlights of aerospace developments which have been adapted in medicine.

MEDICINE HAS ADAPTED ideas, techniques and instrumental equipment of the aerospace age to its own needs.

Today, an estimated quarter of a million Americans are walking around with silicone parts in their bodies. Among them are the 20,000 or more people with artificial heart valves. The silicone technology required for this was originally developed for space uses.

Titanium, a metal developed to meet space requirements, is an alloy component of the newer artificial valves.

At least 80,000 other persons are living with hidden "brain drains" made of dacron, teflon and silastic, which were inserted in order to prevent further development of hydrocephalus ("water on the brain").

The replacement of diseased aortas and other major blood vessels by these space-age plastics and silicone parts now is a commonplace surgical procedure.

Thousands of patients with particular heart problems have the reassurance that their hearts will continue to beat rhythmically by the use of electronic pacemakers. These were made possible by the development of reliable mercury cell batteries and the miniaturization of electrical and electronic systems for use in space craft.

The techniques of radiotelemetry developed for the medical monitoring on earth of astronauts in flight have been adopted for monitoring the critically ill, the surgical patient, and patients with heart disease. The automatic triggering of electronic warning devices in this monitoring indicating need for prompt medical intervention, has saved many lives.

Studies of lung function and respiration in aerospace medicine laboratories have made available for emergency use new kinds of mechanical respirators.

Studies of oxygen toxicity have eliminated the cause of many so-called "interstitial pneumonias" previously found in patients who had been placed on controlled respiration with 100 per cent oxygen for prolonged periods.

Aerospace low pressure chamber studies have resulted in the application of "hyperbaric" conditions to

clinical use. This condition—consisting of an oxygen atmosphere of stronger than normal pressure—permits a more complete oxygen saturation of the red cells in the blood. It has been used in surgery for certain inborn heart defects.

One unique use is in the removal of kidneys from deceased patients for transplantation to persons with diseased kidneys. Hyperbaric pressure seems to provide a higher percentage of success than normal pressure. Hyperbaric oxygenation also is useful in treatment of the "bends" and compression sickness of scuba divers.

The development of Fiber-Optic lighting—making it possible to see around curves and corners—has dramatically increased the reliability of endoscopic procedures for examining body cavities.

Laser beams are still largely experimental, but they have been used in relieving obstruction by abnormal growths in throat and upper chest. Laser technology, with its highly concentrated light beams, also gives promise of new hope to cancer patients. Malignancies have been destroyed successfully by exposure to a single-pulse, high-energy beam.

A new surgical technique uses the energy of the laser beam to interconnect blood vessels. However, its major medical application until now is in eye surgery, where the ophthalmologist can focus, aim and fire the laser beam at a detached retina to obtain a rapid, painless and efficient repair.

Thermography depends upon the supersensitive detection of small fractions of a degree difference in heat. Thermograms—"heat photographs" of an object's surface—have been taken to determine the presence of abscesses under casts. This is possible because inflamed areas are warmer than the surrounding skin.

Where blood flow is decreased or cut off by abnormal growths or inborn obstructions, the sites can be localized by this technique. Certain cancerous areas are warm in contrast to surrounding tissues, whereas cysts and other benign abnormalities are cooler. Therefore, thermography becomes another extremely sensitive diagnostic tool in the detection and evaluation of disease.

AN OUTGROWTH of insulation studies in the aerospace industry is a plastic polymer gel of the same density as human fat at body temperature. This property makes the material an ideal padding for bedridden patients because it creates no pressure points and it prevents bed sores.

Bioelectric stimulation and control systems are a direct application of aerospace technology to the human body. Such a system has been used to permit muscles in the upper limb to motivate a voluntary pinch mechanism in an artificial hand. The electric impulses of voluntary muscles are transmitted through electrodes to an amplifier powered by a space-age battery. The amplifier activates a motor in the base of the artificial hand.

Electric devices also translate the signals from a normal muscle into a current for the stimulation of a paralyzed muscle. Thus, motion of those parts mirrors the motion of the normal muscle. This permits a grading in the strength of the contracture and better

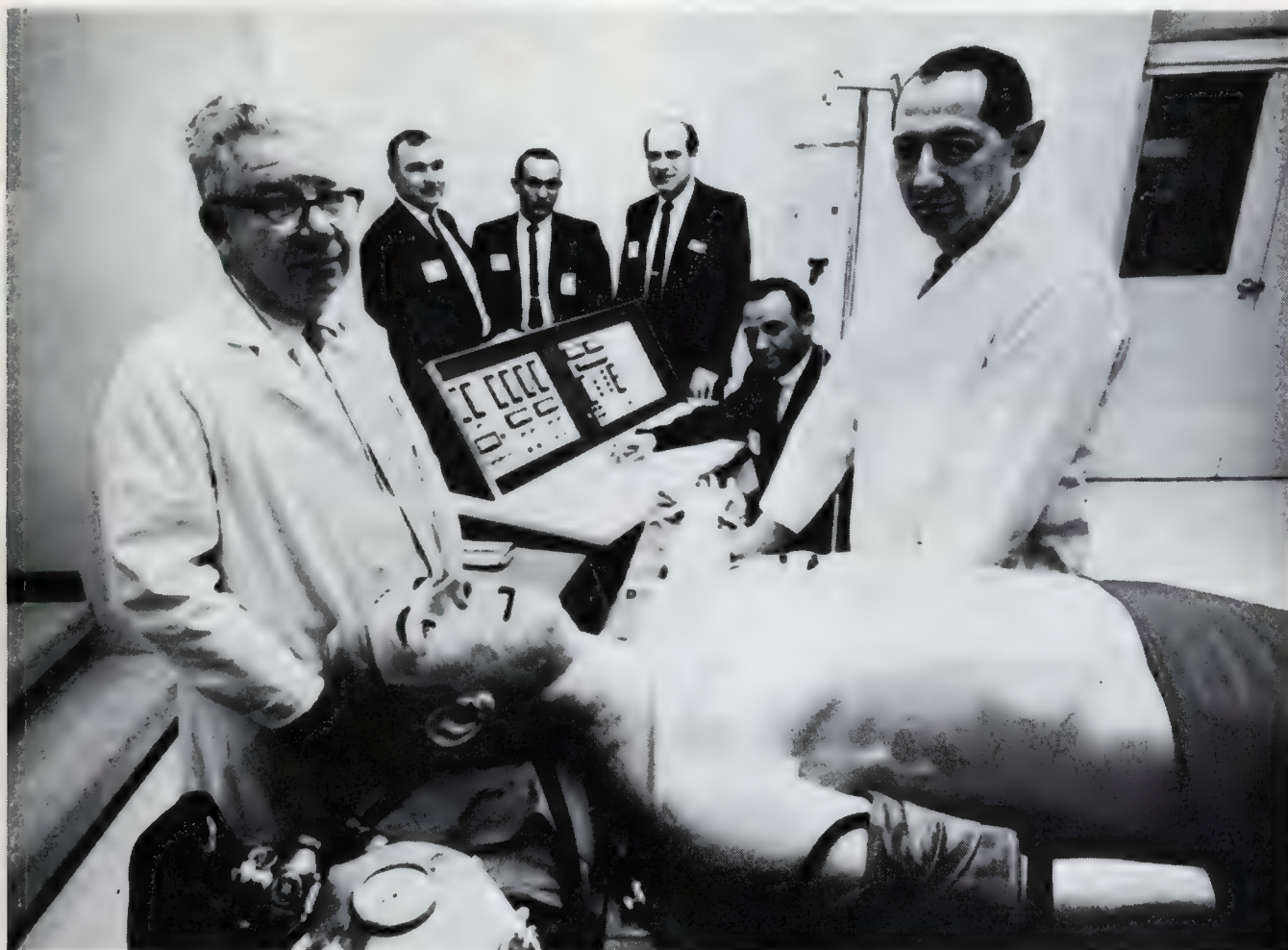
control than the mere "On-Off" stimulation of such muscles in former systems.

Another direct application of aerospace equipment for medical purposes is the use of Northrup cable for an upper extremity prosthesis. Used originally as throttle cable on aircraft, it is also called Bowden cable or linear pull cable, and gives the wearer more strength and better control of his artificial arm.

Velcro closure tape was designed originally for space suits, but now it has many and varied adherent, fastening and closure applications in clinics and hospitals such as for tourniquets, blood pressure cuffs, emergency splints, cervical collars, and braces.

Even methods and procedures have been borrowed from the aerospace industry, and they have had an influence on medicine.

FOR EXAMPLE, the U.S. National Aeronautics and Space Administration and the Department of Defence devised a "weapons systems approach" that



A computer-guided patient-simulator that reacts to medical treatment as a human would has been developed as a teaching aid at the University of Southern California. Called "Sim One" the device breathes, blinks and responds to injections of drugs and to artificial respiration. The computer introduces typical problems such as heart failure for students to cope with, flashes warning lights when something is done wrong and prints out a critique at the end of a training session. Standing beside the "patient" are Drs. J. S. Danson and Stephen Sbramson who supervised its development.

was designed to make hundreds of separate projects converge to serve a single purpose.

The success of this convergence technique has been repeated and refined in the computerized management of projects of vast scope and complexity.

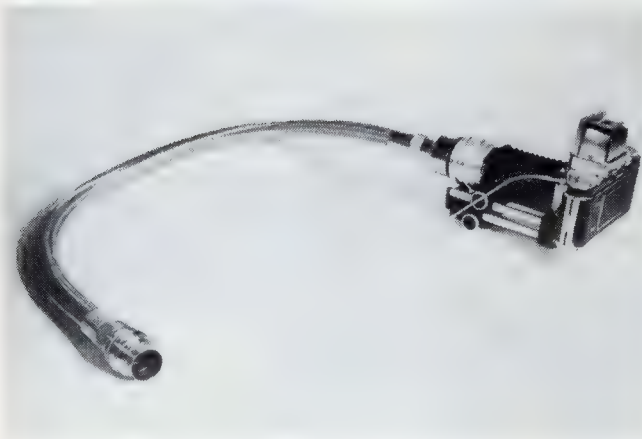
Now, as adopted by medicine, it represents the step-by-step planning of the most highly co-ordinated "total-war" effort ever mounted against specific diseases.

The first project of this type, "The Special Virus Leukemia Programme of the U.S. National Cancer Institute", has made such impressive strides that similar programme analysis and planning have been applied to research on cancer medicines and will be applied to breast cancer research.

The basic ingredient of the programmes is the division of research into major areas with a manager in charge of each. These managers work under a single co-ordinator, the programme manager.



Operating in a high-pressure oxygen chamber



The flexiscope, a development of fibre optics now in use in many hospitals

All of these scientists work in close collaboration with one another as well as with scientists outside the programme, including many in other countries.

Therefore, any new concept or discovery anywhere in the world can be made known instantly anywhere else it might be useful. In the past, years were often lost after the completion of research before the results were published and circulated and could be put to use on patients who could benefit from them.

Another method of expediting research has been to support duplicate efforts, a tactic that on the surface appears wasteful.

Why should two men or two laboratories do the same work?

In the normal course of research, a scientist or a team in one laboratory might work months or years to achieve a result and eventually publish a technical paper or present the data at a scientific meeting.

However, nothing is ever accepted in science until someone else repeats the experiments and confirms the results. Therefore, if the information looks promising, someone else sets out to do exactly the same experiments, and months or years later, if the results are similar, the original work is considered confirmed.

By assigning two men in two laboratories to a problem simultaneously, each confirms the work of the other—and, meanwhile, they can exchange data for their mutual benefit—and the extra months and years are saved.

This type of research approach, as used in the development of space equipment and weapons systems in the United States, appears to be paying off in medicine also.

The practice of medicine is largely a process of information collection, manipulation, retrieval and communication. The success of medical ventures is influenced more by the information processing skills of the participants than by any other single factor.

Recognizing this, several U.S. companies have devised advanced concepts in medical application of computer operation that virtually eliminates manual manipulation and retrieval of information and promises to revolutionize hospital information systems.

Not only will the system make the physician more efficient, but it will reduce routine paperwork and facilitate the keeping of records that will be uniform, absolutely up to date, and legible.

Thus medication orders will be relayed electronically to the wards, laboratory, pharmacy, or pertinent clinic immediately and recorded at the same time. The potential will mean sizable savings in time, personnel and money. Much of the drudgery now associated with the recording, processing and retrieval of medical information will be eliminated.

These are only highlights of what space-age knowledge and technology have done and can contribute to the advancement of medicine. This is merely the beginning. The application of aerospace medical developments in medicine will continue.

MICHAEL BUTTERWORTH

CONCENTRATE 1

FRAGMENTS OF A LETTER FOUND IN A DEAD ASTRONAUT'S POSSESSIONS

Takeoff: fumed and awful gravity pull.

I am leaving earth forever.

Time: cancelled by this crave for sexual desire. Streaming grey matter from the nose.

Hands: blood things filmed with cellophane, centred bone, dying edges of some bleak being.

Granular images blocked in the electric dark of my skull. Space is a vast church, though no people have any connection with it, or if they had they would fall out of time.

Space is a matrix of avenues, cold planes of continuity. Human feature is blurred by the spiralling patterns of space, rendered insignificant by their continual cone formation and wave within wave fluctuation. It becomes an inverted reassembly of its actual makeup, a highway of space and its sized, ever-changing globular designs.

I am in a presence. Space is composed of these continually blended, interplaying phases of itself—an incident within presence.

I'm drained of time. A sperm floating. A haze of tears, where hard stones are the stars.

DEEP FREEZE UNIT FOR HUNGRY SPACERS

The moon was out shining. Some strange animals had made a nest in his beard. A bolt cracked the mirror in two parts so he could see the landscape below stretched pink into the distance.

Clalvalar started running away, screaming as the temperature rose:

"I'M THE DEEP FREEZE MAN—THE DEEP FREEZE MAAAANN—" Soon landscape responded to his call and it darted redhot points of light on to his quavering body. Responded and sent him staggering to top speed over the whitehot rocks. Into the dark green cloudland land of night where the pink sun never had its chance. Into the cold and purple lozenge of his deep freeze unit.

The planet had woken—seven shades from dawn.

From the tops of the deep freeze unit he could see the tops of monsters lumbering into the green dark of the planet's other half.

Clalvalar's unit was buckled below the black fingerless hulk of the Deep Freeze itself. He depressed a

lever.

From under the cavernous mouth of Deep Freeze two wide rivers began to run. The rivers branched into countless thousands of parallel channels spreading a clawed hand over the entire sunny side—thawing food—depositing it for use at the tops of tall feeder towers.

Black stainless flies, attracted by the adverts in space, buzzed around and settled magnetically clamped to the towers and rose after feeding. Clalvalar began to scream. Amplifiers shrieked out of hand from all points of the planet: I'M THE DEEP FREEZE MAN—THE DEEP FREEZE MAAAANN—"

"The Deeepp Freeeezzzzz Maaaaann—" Contraption picked up and pierced out in its tiny high voice.

Contraption controlled Frozen Foods as they drifted swiftly under its bulk, draining noises from the air. Deadly and sick machine worked inside its sprawled gut spraying gamma rays from its gulf belly.

The green night advanced the slow rumbling of the monsters and spun the world round.

Clalvalar plunged up the lever and was left in silence. He ran out to catch the trade cold and the frozen noise of splitting rocks in the green night. The last to linger round the towers were the regulars.

THE CATALOGUE OF THE WORKS OF MAN

A sharp outlined final landscape—privileged. Nothing like it had met up with me before.

The Automobile was not a part of the landscape as I was a part of the brain landscape.

The Automobile sprang into focus. For a moment the buildings of the car of the Man slotted into place, then fell apart dreaming.

I got in.

Red cab rolling silently off. It was a sharp outlined final landscape. I caught sight of the Artist pottering about amongst the rubble.

"OK?" he said, drawing near. "Blueblack or blue-black, take your pick."

"Oh an awful lot of nothing. A lead on the singer Ringo Starr maybe or a crossriddle to hell. Was he? Or maybe no good. I can't get these straight lines. Ads all over the place. Difficult to follow. Maybe if we tried the old library?"

(Remembered seeing the Palace Theatre. And further up the road the round bearable dome of the Manchester Public Library.)

"No records there. I checked. Blueblack stains on the walls. Some fungus in all that silence or now the Stones are coming."

As we talked the last clouds were coiling fantastically within the Wave. Wave of substance and dark culture. Leftovers of the white bones of the Men—silent curlers creeping into the unknown substance of the concrete chips, clipped together with hairpin fragments of bone. Only the sun made a noise as it set behind the clouds—a sucking sound.

"The City," I shot a death hand over silence and hung clouds over the City.

A hole in the ground sent firmly a slit eye to stare up at me forever. Several soft spots of sand. The last of Man and somehow very sad.

The Artist rose from where he had been, and walked away into the shadows. Blackness within made me stay late in the last night, sifting sand through old and electric but fine.

The morning.

I swallowed.

I turned into the City.

I sat in the dark for hours as the sun rose.

AFTER GALACTIC WAR, FROM A ROAD ON EARTH

The road wound along under the night sky. Set in the sky were the crystals of the ships that had broken. Each chip was a silent last fleck of humanity. Together with the vanity of the ground which bent up to meet them, the space beyond buckled inwards under the pressure of the true stars and sandwiched the chips into bars of space music. They needed no air—were the archaic flowers off the rings of all dead girls—gems centred the jewelled scene into curls in the front of my head.

I looked out of the forehead of a double-decker bus and my legs were wheels. I rolled over the pitted road pickpocketing the night. I rode the night like a baby stalk lost in Heaven not seven, anymore, wondering why.

TO BE READ INDIFFERENTLY

Adverts come and adverts go and if you're lucky they'll make an impression. I tried to make a really vivid impression upon myself before the War Atomic Agoraphobia Maniacs overtook the planet. A Heinz beancan label, for instance, makes a world of difference to your reasoning power—it virtually dulls it out. And those are the mental conditions you/I kind of wanted when we realised the end was at hand.

Camp Concentration : continued from page 25

approached me, wiggling his tiny pink nose with the pleasure of anticipation, its furry wings fluttering spasmodically, like the beating of a defective heart. With chubby fingers it reached into the flowerlike and suppurating wound of its scrotum and withdrew thence a thin white host covered with indecipherable script.

"I'm afraid . . . that I don't . . . understand."

"You must eat it, of course," Thomas Aquinas explained. "Then your understanding will be as a god's."

The cherub forced the bread (which smelled of that same odour that had earlier risen from the pit) into my mouth. Releasing me, the angels burst into song:

O esca viatorum,

O panis angelorum,

O manna cœlitum

Esurientes ciba,

Dulcédine non priva,

Corda quaerentium.

As the nauseating sweetness spread through my mouth, the message, like a lamp burning miraculous oils, dazzled me with its insupportable truth.

"How could I not have known!"

I could see our names in giant letters of azure and gold, as clearly as in any book: George Wagner's first; 'then Mordecai's, and all the other prisoners' in a

monotonous progression; and there at the bottom of the page, my own.

But the pain lay not in this, but in the certainty that I *had* known. I had known almost since my arrival at Camp Archimedes.

Aquinas rolled on the floor with laughter, a limbless sowbelly stomach pumping blood into a great horned pumpkin of a head. His bellowing filled the room, blotting out the angels' gentle carol, and I woke.

Later:

Haast, under pressure, confirms what it is no longer in any case possible to conceal, which had been kept from me this long only by my own desperate, deliberate blindness. Now that I do know it, now that I *know* I know it, I feel an actual relief, like a murderer whose case has dragged on for weeks and who hears his verdict at last, the verdict that had never been in doubt—"Guilty"—and, with the same sureness, his sentence, "Death". It was not a dream, and the message was true. I have been, since May 16, infected with the Pallidine. Everyone here had known but I, and I, though I would not listen to the whispers until they were a bellowing that filled the world, I had known too.

(To be continued)

Thomas Elva Edison and the Novel Today

a review of *Tlooth* by Thomas M. Disch

IN 1939 *Finnegans Wake* was published and the war began. The quarter-century before had been, for the novel, a golden age, which bequeathed us almost all that we regard as characteristically Modern; the quarter-century since has been, with the exception of Beckett, a period of reaction, especially in England and America. The younger novelists, as though daunted by Joyce's supreme experiment, wrote works that seldom departed, in manner or form, from the most ordinary models available to them. Innovation ceased, and Dullness consolidated her gains.

A preamble of sweeping generality—but without it I cannot express the extent of my admiration for Harry Mathews, which is well-nigh evangelical. There are now, here and there, other zephyrs blowing—John Barth, Susan Sontag, Donald Barthelme, Thomas Pynchon—but none so strong as this, none that bear so clearly and deliciously the tang of spring.

Mathews has written two novels. The first, *The Conversions*, was published by Random House in 1962; the second, *Tlooth*, has just been brought out by Doubleday as

the first of its new Paris Review Editions (\$3.95).

For sheer density and diversity of invention I know of no modern novel comparable to *Tlooth*. It resembles, in some respects, the fabulous adventure stories of the 18th century — *Gulliver's Travels*, *Candide*, etc. — though it never suffers from the sometimes labour-some systematization and didacticism of these books; in other ways it is like *Alice in Wonderland*, though I have always supposed that book's greatness to be a lucky accident. Mathews, by contrast, is a conscious master. Wild as his inventions are, and various, they are as scrupulously calibrated and as sturdily composed as the elements of a novel by Mann.

But such considerations are all very much after the fact. The fact of *Tlooth*, overriding all else, is delight. It is, page by page, an immensely funny and exhilarating book.

It is divided into five books. The first begins with a baseball game being played between Fideists and Defective Baptists, two rival "religious" groups in the imaginary Siberian labour camp of Jackson-

grad. The narrator attempts to blow up the batter (Evelyn Roak, a surgeon imprisoned for "supplying human fragments to a delicatessen" and for "scandalous amputations", among them, the removal of the narrator's index and ring fingers, the narrator being then a violinist) with an elaborately booby-trapped baseball. This much information, and more, is conveyed in the first two pages. The body of the first section deals with the narrator's attempts to dispose of Roak, then, prevented in these efforts, to escape from Jacksongrad with three other prisoners.

The second book chronicles the prisoners' journey across the Russian steppes towards Afghanistan. The prose here is a hilarious muddle of old Baedekers, natural history, anthropologists' field reports and *Gulliver*. There is an interpolated story (or conundrum), in the chapter "*Spires and Squares*", that is the equal of the best things in Borges.

Book III is set in Venice, where the narrator is convalescing from "mustard poisoning" and writing the script of a blue movie. Due to the narrator's illness, the script, a little masterpiece in itself, wanders in and out of the story proper to produce

droll juxtapositions. At the end of this sequence the significance of the book's title is at last revealed, or finally concealed—which, the reader must himself determine.

In the fourth book the narrator finally confronts the diabolic surgeon, E. Roak, after a pursuit that takes them through India, Morocco and Italy. Later, in France, the narrator is cured of a vile infection contracted in Book I.

And in Book V everything that the reader has been led to believe in the first four sections is stood on its head. Mathews plays the game perfectly fairly, but his sleight-of-hand is prodigious. One leaves the book, the first time, blinded by the sheer dazzle of it.

The wonder is that all these shimmering trees (and the summary neglects to mention large elements of the plot, let alone its grace notes; by my count there are eighty major inventions in 139 pp. of text, which have been spaced out by Doubleday to 191 pp.) do make a forest, even a rather dense one. The unifying element, beyond the plot, is its obsessed tone. The narrator is constantly preoccupied with medical matters; almost all the material of the novel reflects this obsession in some way. The prose reads at times like the most inspired of crank letters, at other times like a technical footnote from the *Scientific American*. All the conflicts of the novel seem to have their root in the ancient rivalry of two "medical families", the Chavenders and the Allants, whose history is presented in Book I in the most convincing, if preposterous, detail. Mathews has an encyclopaedic knowledge of the real absurdities of history and the authentic improbabilities of science, and so skilfully does he knit these elements into his tale that one can never quite determine where our own unlikely world leaves off and his begins. Finally he gives the impression that he created *all* of it. *Tlooth* is a wholly imaginary novel and this is its greatness, this is how it has circumvented the dullness that seems to infect even the best of the conventional novels of our time. It is enough that it is consistent within its own terms; happily, it refuses to be consistent with ours.

In speaking of Mathews' precedents I deliberately neglected mention of the chief. The French poet

and novelist, Raymond Roussel, whose work is only now becoming available in English, has supplied Mathews with significant models in such works as *Impressions d'Afrique* and *Locus Solus*, written in the twenties. Not having read Roussel, I cannot estimate the full extent of Mathews' originality. I am inclined to think, on the basis of secondary evidence, that Mathews achieves by conscious artistry what was possible for Roussel only through the agency of insanity—a common progression in the history of art. Nevertheless, in seeking to praise Mathews adequately, I find that I am reduced to quoting an essay by Michel Leiris on Roussel: He was . . . "a champion of the imagination . . . pursuing 'euphoria' in the almost demigod-like exercise of his intellect. . . . His effort tends toward the creation of a fictive world, entirely fabricated, having nothing in common with reality; what he invents is valid only insofar as it is invented, where he succeeds in creating truth by the force of his genius alone, without having recourse to some further reality."

The search for precedents, however, is finally beside the point, and nothing could better illustrate this than the fact that Roussel regarded *his* master to be Jules Verne. We get off the merry-go-round where we got on: I end by offering the small (but not, I hope, damning) praise that *Tlooth* is incontestably the best piece of s.f. of our age.

THE UNPRIVILEGED. By Jeremy Seabrook (Longmans, 25s.)

TO BEGIN THIS review as this book begins: in the year 1779, the wife of a Northamptonshire ploughman bore a male child by the name of Joseph Timms. Almost nothing is known of Joseph except for one item; he married a woman, Mary, who bore him five children, the eldest of whom was christened Ellen. Ellen is still remembered with shame in the family, for she lay with her father Joseph when she was nineteen and bore him a daughter, also called Ellen.

With this calamitous event, Mr. Seabrook's family history is launched. But this is hardly a family

history in the accepted sense; it is more a social history than a family history, and more an anthropological study of a strange tribe than anything else.

This was an unprivileged family. Its members were poor; the few who "married well" were regarded as outcasts; most of the men laboured in the Northampton shoe trade and, when circumstances in the early nineteenth century impelled them to move into the seedier parts of town, they took with them the idiom and superstitions of the countryside.

They also took with them all the limitations that centuries of underprivileged living had implanted. The transplantation to town seemed to bring no new growth. The great movements of our own decades likewise seem to have brought no rejuvenation, only a break-up of the family—unless, that is, we exclude Mr. Seabrook himself, a grammar school boy who made it to Cambridge, is now a schoolmaster, and has contributed articles to *NEW SOCIETY*, where part of the material of this book first appeared.

Every reader will have to decide how much of it to accept. Some of it is immediately convincing; most of us have seen in our own families the same intensive hostility to new ideas that Seabrook records.

Seabrook stands at the other end of the spectrum from Richard Hoggart. His family has no cosy but healthy culture based on sound earthy values; his family has nothing worth retaining. Whether to its own members or to neighbours, its attitude was based strictly on commands of self-survival.

It is represented as being impervious to new experience. It took from and gave to the town to which it gravitated nothing, for it was incapable of learning. It lived by stereotypes. So we get a view of the industrial revolution from the bottom, and a terrifyingly negative view it is.

SEABROOK PUTS the matter succinctly in his foreword: "For a long time, my family passed on to each succeeding generation a knowledge of its history, its customs, ideas and values, and for as long as anyone can remember the transition from one generation to another had been accomplished without hiatus,

as the received ideas were accepted and assimilated without question. But towards the middle of the twentieth century the process of transmission began to break down.

"This book deals with the falling into obsolescence and decay of a way of life once believed by those who shared it to be the only admissible form that human life could take."

This extracts shows, incidentally, the tone Seabrook takes throughout the book; he is out of sympathy with his wretched family; and if we can hardly blame him, we must be aware that it will lead him to exaggerate its bleakness.

Let us go back to Joseph and Mary Timms in their rural idyll. Of the five children, three were boys and one a girl, Hannah, all younger than the sinning Ellen. All that is remembered of the eldest boy is that his hair turned white overnight when his young wife died in childbirth, less than a year after their marriage. The next born was Thomas, Seabrook's great-grandfather; he made shoes on a bench in a small red-brick kitchen, and

walked the eleven miles into Northampton twice a week to sell them and collect more leather from the tanneries.

Thomas married a pious and good-living woman, "but it is suggested that her piety was at least in part an atonement for the one child she bore out of wedlock, my grandmother".

The third born of Joseph's children lived to be ninety-seven, "his longevity having produced nothing more remarkable than itself". The youngest child, Hannah, introduced herself as a temporary servant into the house of a vicar's daughter, there to give birth to a stillborn child which she buried in the night-soil of the privy, where its body was later discovered.

The reactions of the family to this event? Here are two of Seabrook's comments: "It was less the illegitimate child which affronted her kinsfolk than the disrespect showed by implicating the parish priest in her crimes." And: "They show almost total unanimity in their demand for increased severity to combat present-day immorality or

crime."

Seabrook is ingenious in demonstrating such primitive tribal beliefs, and the awful results of their application. The beliefs had set steel-hard in the family mass-mind; they over-rode any considerations that study of individual character might have raised; indeed, they largely replaced character, since child programming by them eradicated individuality and sensitivity; in fact, it seems likely that the unwitting intention of this sort of programming was to eliminate sensitivity, a characteristic with an anti-survival value in the grimy back streets of Northampton.

THE PROGRAMMING, if that term is permissible, began in early childhood. Seabrook's grandfather, Edwin, was typical of his lack of love for his children. Like all the men, he was taciturn and spoke little. "A few ritual phrases constituted the only oral contact between him and his wife and he displayed a complete indifference to the children, except when he felt called upon to punish them for one mis-

The Hidden Order of Art



**Anton
Ehrenzweig**

A deeply penetrating examination of the psychology of the artist (writer, musician, painter, sculptor) and of artistic creativity.

Sir Herbert Read wrote of Ehrenzweig's *The Psycho-analysis of Artistic Vision and Hearing* 'combines a profound knowledge of modern psychology with an equally profound knowledge of all the arts . . . It has . . . been a direct inspiration to many artists'.

30 plates 11 line drawings 63s

Weidenfeld & Nicolson

**PEACE
AND
WAR**
A Theory of International Relations
RAYMOND ARON

From France's leading political thinker . . .

'acute analysis . . . noble, temperate and magisterial book'.

Martin Wright, Observer

'could be read with profit by anyone concerned with international relations'.

Anthony Hartley, New Society
105s

demeanour or another. . . . The cruelty of all our menfolk was felt to be of great disciplinary value in the formation of their children, a view with which many of the children in later life concurred."

Edwin's wife Ellen bore him twelve children. They all went to work in the boot factory. Their upbringing was casual. The parents meted out advice "rendered portentous and oracular by mysterious reference to their 'experience'. This experience, which they invoked to interpret or explain away any event that occurred, stood them in the stead of actual knowledge. It meant that they had known want, witnessed death and seen a certain amount of human suffering. But all this penetrated their consciousness and then simply lay there, heavy and unproductive as a stone."

The family was superstitious, coarse, clannish, xenophobic; the men claimed to know everything and to be brave enough to do anything—at least they did when among their own class, although to superiors they were uneasily deferential; the woman suffered endlessly,

worked fruitlessly, endured all that their husbands inflicted on them.

They were not equipped to think. The most profound experiences would be shrugged off with reference to some old well-tried platitude. "Still waters run deep, eh?" "They all piss in the same pot." "Oo guz a-borrerin', guz a-sorrerin!" "There's more fish in the sea than ever came out of it." "As you make your bed, so you lay on it." And so on.

They were not equipped to respond to one another. Sex was always something to be enjoyed furtively, and, for the women, perhaps more to be endured than enjoyed. The women expected sexual activity to cease in the early forties, after which signs of affection or physical attraction were considered obscene—a probable explanation of why Joseph Timms turned in desperation to his nineteen-year-old daughter.

They paid lip-service to Christianity, while being deeply pervaded by all sorts of fears and taboos from a much earlier age; if a farmer burned holly, his cows would die;

to kill a spider was to throw money away; sheet-lightning ripened corn; meat handled by menstruating women would go bad; a broken mirror meant seven years' bad luck; a bird tapping at a window was a sign of an approaching death.

WHAT THEY REALLY did believe in was punishment. They could not learn because they imagined the evils that happened to them to be imposed from above according to some obscure punitive system (which doubtless related to the arbitrary clouts they had endured as kids). One woman bore a child with a club-foot; she took it as a sign that she had done something wrong. When Edwin struck Ellen, or failed to come home at night, she asked herself what she had done to deserve such a man. Seabrook's is by no means the only family through which such colourful questions echoed.

It followed from this that the crippled child or Edwin was reduced, made shadowy, transformed, by this warped religious view into the merely subsidiary rôle of an

TO NEW WORLDS SUBSCRIPTION DEPT:

I enclose £ (\$) being my subscription
to NEW WORLDS for months

Name

Address

Subscription Rates: 48s (\$ 7.00) per year (12 issues). 24s (\$ 3.50) for six months

new worlds 87 Ladbroke Grove, London W.11.

Affliction. Any psychological insight on the situation was thus ruled out; it would never have occurred to Ellen that she had met her husband simply by chance and made an unsuccessful marriage. To keep in check the tensions and insecurities of their lives, the family had to believe that nothing was gratuitous, although this view made nonsense of outside reality.

So we come to what I find one of the most chilling statements in a pretty frightening book. With Ellen holding the reach-me-down views she did, she could make no attempt to understand the inner sufferings of her husband. Seabrook says, "His alcoholism was only considered in so far as it related to her own life. Its destructive tyranny over her husband did not concern her, and her repeated magnanimous pardons were intended only to contrast her own virtue with his wanton depravity."

These people, beyond outside help, were unable to help each other. Chapter after chapter takes us through their daily life, from cradle to boozier and from boozier to death, and shows how they were incapable of the profound and enduring human relationships that many would claim are the best things we can find—or offer.

SEABROOK PROVES his point up to the hilt—and beyond it, alas! I hate being over-convinced. I do not see how he could *know* that Ellen only pardoned her husband's drunkenness to contrast her own virtue with his depravity. Although one understands why he hates this awful family, his book would have been more judicious had he managed to hate them less; and that he might have done had he realised how widespread his family's failings were.

He blames most of these failings on an inability to communicate; one does not doubt his reasoning just because some of his feelings are in question. Members of his family were chary of words; they trusted them no more than they trusted the neighbours or the bird hopping on the window-sill. If they had living emotions, they had to be poured into old worn moulds of set phrases and circumlocutions. So they became characterless, alike in life and death. The hub of the book is per-

haps contained in this sentence: "They never pierced the shroud of language which passed from generation to generation, which smothered and stifled their own experience, and rendered indistinguishable their grief or their joy or their suffering from anybody else's."

Thousands of families know the truth of this, know how feeling must be hidden, how in a moment of crisis only some stupid formula of words can be thrust through the teeth. This is a genuinely original book, in that it charts for the first time a new region of experience with which, nevertheless, we are vaguely familiar; George Orwell would have liked it; it is in his cleansing tradition.

TO EXPLAIN THIS phenomenon of frozen communication is someone else's task. Seabrook makes it clear that his family "slumbered on in post-feudal torpor, like some powerful primitive beast". Their language was studded with country sayings, even after more than one generation in the town, and incorporated not only dialect words but unaltered Anglo-Saxon words. And with the fossilised language went fossilised ideas, possibly those concerning family duty and relationships, which may have persisted since before Shakespeare's time. This powerful mind-block negated experience and denied personal expression.

So compelling is this book—and, despite my reservations, which concern the author's pardonable lack of pity towards his tribe of Neanderthals, it is a work which, in richness, bawdiness and variety, compares favourably with a novel of low life—that one is forced to ask how such paralysis could occur, and persist. Are there catastrophes (plagues, shall we say, or invasions, or maybe bombing raids) which can enclose the corporate psyche of a family in trauma, as can happen to individuals? It is a haunting question, in which the happiness of mankind is clearly involved.

There is always famine in the world; famine of experience is even more widespread, and stalks the well-fed western world today. *The Unprivileged* is the most searching exposition of it I have ever encountered.

Brian W. Aldiss

The Spacious Adventures of Kraft-Ebbing

ONCE UPON A TIME, science-fiction looked up from the contemplation of its technological navel and discovered other spheres of interest. Since then, the future has never been the same. Taboos have gone out of the airlock and all too often have taken science with them. Older readers who recall the lurid advertisements in the end pages of the old pulp magazines need no longer feel nostalgia: *Exotic Courtship Practices Around The Globe* has not died—it has simply been incorporated in the fiction department.

Three of the four books reviewed below reflect this saner, healthier, less mentally taxing attitude towards the realities of life. Cannibalism and the minor perversions keep *The Men In The Jungle*, by Norman Spinrad (Doubleday SF, 4 dollars 50 cents) rolling along, while Fritz Leiber's *The Wanderer* (Dobson SF, 25s.) offers an erotic interlude with a feline alien, a sort of extraterrestrial pussy-gal whore, yet still takes second place to "Luana" in *The Best From F. and S.F. Sixteen* (Doubleday SF, 4 dollars 50 cents). The fourth book, Alexander Malec's *Extrapolasis*, also by Doubleday at 3 dollars 95 cents, is wholesome, rather earnest and, unfortunately, dull. A collection of twelve stories of which one, "10:01 A.M.", has appeared in *ANALOG*, it deals largely with the present or the near future, often in the setting of an Arctic war, presumably against Russia. The writing has at times the flavour of a translation, and meanders through a great deal of dialogue to punch lines that have been sapped of their sting by the prolonged build-up.

The Wanderer to some extent also suffers from this diffused approach. Leiber attempts to encompass many characters and themes in this ambitious novel, presenting a world-wide picture of humanity suddenly confronted by a planet-sized spaceship beyond the Moon. As a result, the point of view shifts frequently and rapidly, and tends to outrun the reader's interest. Compensating for this are several memorable descriptions of the *Wanderer*, vaster than



Earth, as she destroys for ever the ancient balance between our world and Luna; the bizarre multitude of beings who form her crew; and that intriguing interstellar traveller, Tigerishka.

The realities of life really get into their swing with *The Men In The Jungle*. Bart Fraden, superior con-man, his mistress, Sophia O'Hara, and his hatchet-man, Willem Vanderling, ousted from a life of luxury in the Asteroid Belt by Earth's space-grabbing ambitions, head for the stars to find an exploitable

world. To finance his operations, Fraden takes along a cargo of terrestrial narcotics, unobtainable upon the colonized extra-Solar planets. Readers who prefer their heroes to be pure of heart can stop right here, because Fraden is the nearest thing to purity that they're going to get. Plunged into a society that has gone systematically insane, with a ruling class of sadists, an army of homicidal maniacs, a subject population bred to work and to be eaten and where women have only one status, slave, he organises a campaign to overthrow the oppressors and lead the people to better things, such as government by Fraden. The ferociously bloody outcome is depicted with something less than subtlety by Spinrad, and the ending, even by anti-heroic conventions, seems unreal, but it is certainly different.

The Best From F. and S.F. Sixteen is an admirable mixture of the



underplayed and the colourful. John Christopher, adept at the former method, contributes a tale of gay dogs, "A Few Kindred Spirits"; Mose Mallette gives a lunatic account of "The Seven Wonders Of The Universe", while Norman Spinrad in rather lighter mood describes the birth of civilisation. With four poems, six Gahan Wilson cartoons and a total of thirteen stories, the collection maintains the high standard expected of this series.

J. Cawthorn

The Authors

LANGDON JONES lives in Ealing, London, was trained as a musician, served with the Band of the Royal Horse Guards and has earned his living as a photographer and copy-writer. He has been on the editorial staff of *NEW WORLDS* for over three years. His next work, three connected stories extremely complex in structure, *The Eye of the Lens*, will be published in *NEW WORLDS* shortly. Jones is 25 and composes music in his spare time.

PETER TATE'S first story, *The Post Mortem People*, was published in *NEW WORLDS* 160. Since then he has contributed regularly to British and American magazines. He lives in Cardiff and is a journalist with the *South Wales Echo*.

CHRISTOPHER FINCH was born in Guernsey; is 27 and now lives in London. A freelance art critic, he contributes regularly to *ART AND ARTISTS*, *ART INTERNATIONAL* and many other journals, including *VOGUE*. A section of a novel, *As A Goose Or A Gull*, was published in *ART AND LITERATURE* No. 6.

We regret that, owing to production problems, John Sladek's *Masterton and the Clerks*, announced in our last issue, will not appear until next month.

Classified Advertisements

Classified advertisements should be sent (cash with copy) to The Advertising Manager, *NEW WORLDS*, 87 Ladbroke Grove, London, W.11.

Rates: 1/- per word.

For Sale

Science Fiction? Fantasy? Hundreds of paperbacks, magazines. Free lists.—L. Walton, 11 Fairbourne Road, Manchester 19.

AMERICAN pulps, pocket books: 500 different titles. Many rarely offered items. Reasonable prices. S.A.E.—Bennett, 52 Fairways Drive, Harrogate, Yorks.

LARGE stock of British and U.S. magazines, paperbacks, hardcovers, new and second-hand. Leading specialist sf dealers.—Want-list and S.A.E. to: Fantast (Medway) Ltd., 75 Norfolk Street, Wisbech, Cambs., England.

Clubs, Functions, etc

CLUB de Fantasia Y Ciencia Ficción, Calle 2 No. 270, 2° LA PLATA (BA), Argentina, S.A.

LONDON SF Circle meets 1st Thursday of every month at The Globe pub, Hatton Garden. Informal, no charges, all welcome, well-known authors always present.

ANNUAL Easter SF Convention will be held next year in Manchester. Details

from Vice-Chairman, SF Convention, 51 Thorn Grove, Cheadle Hulme, Cheadle, Ches.

BRISTOL & DISTRICT SF Group. S.A.E. for details: A. Walsh, 61 Halsbury Road, Bristol 6.

BRITISH SF ASSOCIATION. S.A.E. for details to: Secretary, B.S.F.A., 38 Millfield Road, Deeping St. James, Peterborough, Northants.

Publications

ARGENTINE SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW. Articles, reviews, stories both Argentine and foreign, featuring stories in English and Spanish.—Hector R. Pessina, Casilla de Correo Central 3869, Buenos Aires, Argentina, South America.

AUSTRALIAN SF REVIEW. Subscription details for U.K.: Graham M. Hall, 57 Church Street, Tewkesbury, Glos. Outside U.K.: John Bangsund, 19 Gladstone Avenue, Northcote N.16, Melbourne, Australia.

SUBSCRIBE TO NEW WORLDS. Subscriptions are 48s. per year (\$7.00). Cheques, P.O.s or M.O.s to Subscription Department, 87 Ladbroke Grove, London, W.11.

FABER & FABER

SF 67

BRIAN W ALDISS

Graybeard 18s
The Airs of Earth 18s
The Dark Light Years 18s
Earthworks 16s
The Canopy of Time 18s
Best SF Stories of Brian W Aldiss 21s
Non-Stop
Cloth 18s Paper 7s 6d
Edited by Brian W Aldiss
Best Fantasy Stories 16s
Introducing SF
Cloth 18s Paper 6s

JOHN BRUNNER

Telepathist 18s
The Long Result 18s

EDMUND COOPER

Transit 18s

CHARLES L HARNESS

The Paradox Men 18s

EDMUND CRISPIN

Best SF: Science Fiction Stories
Cloth 18s Paper 8s 6d
Best SF Two
Cloth 18s Paper 6s 6d
Best SF Three
Cloth 16s Paper 6s
Best SF Four
Cloth 18s Paper 6s 6d
Best SF Five 18s
Best SF Six 18s

JAMES BLISH

They Shall Have Stars 18s
A Life for the Stars 18s
Earthman, Come Home 21s
A Clash of Cymbals 18s
Best SF Stories of James Blish 18s

CLIFFORD SIMAK

Aliens for Neighbours 15s

C M KORNBLUTH

The Syndic 18s

For publication in Autumn 67 or Spring 68

BRIAN W ALDISS

An Age (*Autumn*) 21s

JAMES BLISH

The Seedling Stars (*Autumn*) 21s
A Torrent of Faces (*Spring*)

HARRY HARRISON

The Technicolor Time Machine (*Spring*)

KIT REED

Mister Da V and Other Stories
(*Autumn*) 21s

CLIFFORD SIMAK

Best SF Stories of Clifford Simak
(*Autumn*) 21s

C M KORNBLUTH

Best SF Stories of C M Kornbluth (*Spring*)

DAVID I MASSON

The Caltraps of Time (*Autumn*)

GONNER JONES

The Dome (*Spring*)

FABER & FABER LTD 24 Russell Square London WC1

THE WORLD'S FINEST REPERTORY CINEMA

Box Office: WAT 3232/3

Membership Enquiries: GER 4355

nft

National Film Theatre

Southbank London

